

SPUNYARN AND SPINDRIFT

A Sailor Boy's Log

by
ROSE BROWN.



ILLUSTRATED BY

R. T.

PRITCHETT.

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SPUNYARN AND SPINDRIFT

A SAILOR BOY'S LOG

OF

A VOYAGE OUT AND HOME

IN A

CHINA TEA-CLIPPER

BY

ROBERT BROWN.

*WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS
BY ROBT. T. PRITCHETT. ENGRAVED BY JENKIN.*

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THIS BOOK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

CAPTAIN LORD CHARLES BERESFORD, R.N., C.B.,
ETC., ETC., ETC.

BY

THE AUTHOR.



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SPUNYARN AND SPINDRIFT;

OR,

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CHAPTER I.

UNDER WAY.

OUTWARD BOUND—THE DOWNS—SOAPSUDS AND SEA-SICKNESS—BRASS
BUTTONS AND BRASS-WORK—JACK GUDGEON.

IF you please, I am Tommy Davie, and this is my log.

We've been at sea very nearly a fortnight, and I simply haven't written a word in the book my dad gave me when I left home, and which he told me to be sure and bring back to him at the end of this my first voyage, filled from cover to cover, or from clew to earing, as a seaman would have said.

It is all jolly fine to talk about, but quite a different thing to put in actual practice.

I am sitting now in our beastly little hole (at the

owners' office they called it the midshipman's cabin ; in the docks the mate used to speak of it as the apprentice's berth, but here, at sea, they all casually call it the boy's house). Anyhow, here I am, seated on my chest, with the book on my knees, a bottle of ink in my left hand, and the pen in my right, about to fulfil my promise and make a start at any rate.

Overhead a wretched little tin oil-lamp, something like a coffee-pot in shape, is casting what it may probably consider a light on my pages, and swing-swinging about the whole time like Moses' breeches, as the sailors would say ; they are splendid at similes, as I dare say you will find out, if I can manage to remember all I hear, and you have patience to read—well, what I mean to write.

I don't intend to stick down dates like most fellows do in their logs. I saw plenty when I was in the *Worcester* ; fellows used nearly always to bring their logs when they came home from their first voyage—just to show us, you know. . They were pretty nearly all alike : a lot of writing on the first page or so, and then, after a gap of perhaps two or three months, you would see an entry something like this : "Jan. 12.—Arrived at Calcutta."

I don't like dates either ; they make a book look so like a tradesman's bill, and when one sees June 19, or whatever it may be, one always expects the next thing to be, "To one pair strong lace-up boots," or something of the sort, instead of which you will very probably find they passed an iceberg or saw a whale, or something equally interesting.

I hope you won't be shocked by my grammar ; I never can tell the proper places for *whiches* and *thats* and *whos*. I suppose I ought to know, too ; but when I was in the *Worcester* I used to be much fonder of paddling about in the boats than of grinding away in the school.

Oh, I was so dreadfully sick at first. It was a lovely day when we towed down the Thames, and everybody was saying how jolly it was, and prophesying a fine-weather trip down Channel—for the wind was about north—speculating upon how many days we should be in getting into hot weather, and all the rest of it. However, by the time we got to the North Foreland the sky had clouded over, and a wretched drizzling rain came sweeping up from the south-west ; the sea turned a sort of watery-ink colour, and before we were abreast of Deal there was a heavy gale of wind blowing right dead in our teeth. So we anchored just off Walmer Castle, and our tug boat went paddling about the Downs, on the look-out for a job. The last I saw of her she had got hold of a large ship that had been dragging her anchors, and the pair of them were scurrying off up the Gulls in a cloud of driving rain that soon hid them from sight.

All hands were called during the night to pay out more chain. I had to turn out, of course, though I couldn't even stand upright, and might as well have stayed in my bunk for all the use I was. All I did was to straggle about from one side to the other, as the ship rolled, and fall over things.

It was bitterly cold, too, and quite black all round, except when the white crest of a breaking wave went rushing past; and the rain was coming down in such sheets that the riding lights of even the nearest vessels weren't visible. Altogether, with the roaring of the gale, the shouts of the sailors, and the hollow thumping of the seas against our bows as the ship plunged head-long at her anchors, the scene was as wild and gruesome as one can well imagine.

In the morning the wind lulled and came northerly again. We "packed," as the men called it, then, and went off down the Channel at a fine rate. However the next day it came on again from the west'ard as bad as ever.

The ship was as far as Portland when the wind shifted; so the captain wouldn't go back, and there we were banging about for ever so long.

I was being sick over the lee-rail one day, and the mate, who was on the poop, happened to see me. When I was crawling back to our berth he called me, and I went to him.

"What's the matter, boy?" he asked.

"I'm—I'm sick, sir."

"Poor boy, that is a very sad state of affairs," he replied. "Go for'ard and get a bucket with some fresh water in it; I'll give you a scrubber, a bit of soap, and a cloth, and you can go and scrub my berth out. *Fresh* water, remember!"

Oh dear! I got the bucket of water, and he gave me the other things, and showed me which was his cabin.

I sha'n't forget it in a hurry either. His berth was a little place about eight feet square; there were two bunks in it, one over the other; he slept in the top one, and the other was full of all sorts of things—blocks, spunyarn, skeins of twine, marline, and so on, which appeared to have been thrown in there out of the way. There was such a dreadful smell, too, of stale tobacco and of tar, and the floor that I had to wash was simply horrible to contemplate. However, I scrubbed away, but just as I had finished my job the stench and one thing and another got the mastery, and I was ill again—in the bucket.

When I looked up the mate was standing in the doorway laughing. I tried to gasp out some sort of an apology, but he simply said, "Never mind; it will do you more good than all the physic in the ship. Run away now and turn in, and don't come on deck until I call you. I'll look after your bucket."

I was as right as a trivet the next morning, and wanted my breakfast long before seven bells: it was nothing very grand when I got it—simply a junk of cold salt pork, three or four biscuits, and a hookpot of tea. Such tea, too—good water jammed to death, as Edwards called it. Edwards is one of our two senior apprentices; he is quite a man, though; nineteen, I should think.

I have given over calling myself a midshipman now. The owners may call us so when they pocket our governors' premiums if they like, but it is a delusion and a snare. Why, the first day I was well enough to keep my morning watch on deck I had to clean the

long-boat out. The long-boat by itself wouldn't be so bad, but then, you see, it is quite filled with sheep and cocks and hens and ducks, so I needn't tell you what sort of a state it is in every morning.

The other junior apprentice—his name is Charlie Dawson, and he joined when I did—has to clean it out in his morning watch on deck; he is in the starboard watch, and I am in the port, so we have alternate days. And then, after the long-boat is scraped out, and the live stock fed, we have to clean all the brass-work before breakfast, or, if it is not finished, and properly done too, we have to do it in our forenoon watch below.

Edwards says it is all right, that he had to do the same, and that, as far as he knows, all midshipmen or apprentices in the merchant service commence learning their profession by performing similar duties; but I must say it rather capsizes my previous notions on the subject.

I got my hands in a terrible mess the first morning that I cleaned the brass-work; it hadn't been polished for some time, and consequently it was smothered with verdigris. The old darkey cook sang out to me as I went past the galley, after it was all polished up—"Hi! you boy—what you do, eh? Clean 'e brass-work? Dat bery nice for young gentleman—clean 'e brass-work. Ho! ho! ho! Lemme look you paws; tought so; hold out you hans, and ole cook gib you lump of slush fo' clean yourself; and look-a-here, chile, when you done clean off de muck; don't wipe your hans on de seat ob you pants like boy gen'ally do."

Fancy having to wash one's hands in grease! What would the mater say?

I can fancy the dear old lady, as she may be at this present moment, for all I know, holding forth to one of her friends—old Mother Westthrop, our doctor's wife, for instance—and most likely giving her a minute account of my outfit (said outfit cost the governor nearly a hundred pounds, and I am just beginning to find out that most of the articles are as useless to me as a cambric handkerchief to a South Sea Islander, and that it would have been far better if I had simply brought away all the old clothes I could have laid my hands on, with just a decent suit for wearing ashore), and afterwards her conversation will very likely be something in this style: "You know, my dear Mrs. Westthrop, Tommy (that's me; my name is Sydney Malcolm Davie, as a matter of fact, but everybody calls me Tommy) always wished to go to sea, though his father and I were never very partial to the idea. However, he was so bent upon being a sailor that we consented at last, and he has just gone as a midshipman (ahem!) on the *Albatross*." She will be sure to say "on" the *Albatross*; all shore people do, though nothing sounds more lubberly to a seaman; so make a note of it, all you cardboard sailors and would-be nautical swells; always say *in* a ship, or, for the matter of that, anything else that floats, bar a raft.

Then perhaps the dad will shove his oar into the conversation, opining that we are well out of the cold latitudes, and proceeding to draw a purely imaginary

picture of his darling son for the edification of his listeners, something in this way: "Now that the ship is well out of this horribly cold, foggy climate, Tommy



TOMMY AS THEY FANCIED HE WOULD BE.

(Note: a white drill suit, trousers slightly loose at the ankles, short jacket with brass buttons, white cap with a gold badge and gold chin stay—quite charming.) He will be walking up and down the quarter-deck, chatting with the other midshipmen, and doubtless be enjoying himself thoroughly."

In his mind's eye the dad will see a stately ship, with

will no doubt wear that very pretty white uniform of his—the one, my dear, that he wore at the fancy dress ball on the evening before his ship sailed.



TOMMY AS HE REALLY WAS.

a cloud of white canvas aloft, gracefully cleaving her way through a slightly undulating sea that seems to quiver in the hot sunlight. On the poop is a knot of officers in brilliant uniforms ; a sedate seaman, dressed like the man-o'-war Jacks we often see ashore, is at the wheel, and overhead the old red ensign of England flutters gaily in the gentle breeze.

If such a conversation had taken place this morning at about ten o'clock, and if my respected parents could have seen me as I really appeared at that time, they would have had presented to their notice an extremely dirty youth, smothered in rust accumulated during the process of stowing the cables in the chain lockers, and gaily daubed all over with coal tar acquired while helping a man to black the anchors with that sweet-smelling compound.

Live and learn.

I couldn't make out the crew for a long time ; I certainly didn't think they were sailors—such a dirty lot, and all so tipsy when they tumbled aboard in Shadwell Basin. One fell overboard there, and another drunken wretch jumped in after him. I've no doubt the whole of the mob would have gone to the rescue if the mates hadn't stopped them.

A waterman's boat picked the two men up, and when they were dragged aboard the ship they immediately commenced to fight ! Mr. Locke, the second mate, wanted to separate them, but the mate, Mr. Harvey, said : " Oh, let them sweat, let them hammer it out of each other ; they'll be sober all the sooner."

I must say they are all very different now that they are sober. The mate told me yesterday that we had got a splendid ship's company, and he ought to know.

I have to march up and down the lee-side of the poop during my watch on deck at night. I rather liked it at first; there was a sort of satisfaction in feeling some responsibility, and the earnest way in which I used to gaze under the foot of the mainsail in quest of lights was most praiseworthy.

I don't think quite so highly of it now, though; and if I dared I would rather coil myself down somewhere and go to sleep. But I can't, for I have to strike the bell every half-hour, and besides that duty the mate is continually drumming me up with, "Boy, this binnacle light wants trimming," or, "Boy, go for'ard and see who's on the look-out; tell him to keep his eyes open and see the side lights are bright," or something of the sort.

I hadn't quite got my sea legs on the first time I journeyed forth on the latter errand, and just as I got safely past the fore rigging the ship gave a tremendous lurch; I made a grab at a belaying-pin, missed it, and the next moment I was shot head first against the fore-castle door.

"'Ullo, wot's this a-goin' on?" exclaimed a gruff voice from within, as the door slid back, disclosing the face of one of our watch.

"Wot is it, Tom?" queried somebody else inside.

"Oh, only our kid as 'as made a starn board and brought up agin the door."

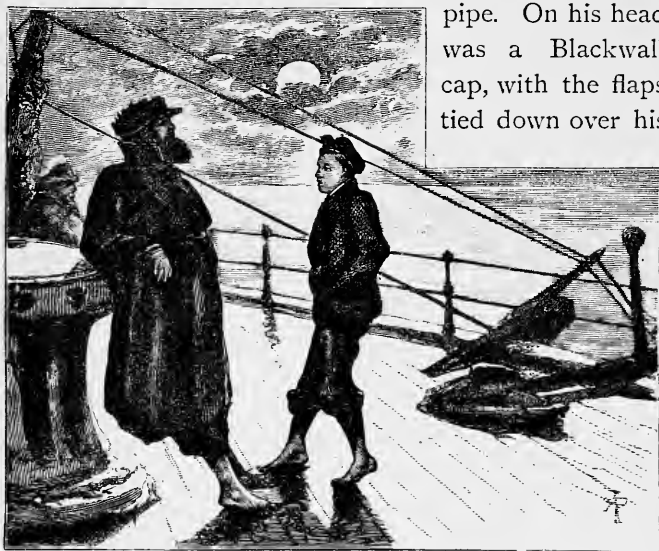
"Has he broke his d—d neck?"

"Not as I knows on."

"Well, then, shut the gate, for the wind's a-givin' me the gastric joose all down my back."

When I got on the top-gallant-forecastle I saw a man there, whom I rightly judged was on the look-out. He was leaning against the capstan, smoking a very black

pipe. On his head was a Blackwall cap, with the flaps tied down over his



JACK GUDGEON ON THE LOOK-OUT.

ears, and the rest of his body was enveloped in a soldier's monstrous great-coat, with shoulder-straps, and a sort of belt buttoned at the back.

He turned round as I approached, and taking the pipe out of his mouth, said, "Well, my hearty, you've arrived at last, then ; I seen you buzzing about on the main deck, like a blue-tailed fly in a strange kitchen ; now

you have come, wot's the noos? Does the mate want to know the c'rrect longitood, or has he sent you to get a new wire strop for the poop downhaul-block?"

I told him that Mr. Harvey hadn't mentioned either of those things, and repeated the message I had brought.

"Oh, that's it, is it? Wery well, tell the mate that Jack Gudgeon is on the look-out, and that I'll see to my end of the ship if he'll look after his'n; or, if more convenient, he can lend me his chart and parallel rulers, and we'll change ends.

"Now away you go aft; I dare say by the time you get there 'twill be four bells, and mind you strike it exact to a hinstant, for my two hours is up then, and 'tis mortal cold bein' perched up here like a sparrer on a round of beef."





CHAPTER II.

DIRTY WEATHER.

HOVE TO—INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS—BILLY LOONEY—A
PLEASANT INTERVIEW—DRINKING THE CAPTAIN'S HEALTH.

NEXT morning the wind, which had been for days and days from the south'ard and west'ard, worked round to north-west, where it stuck long enough to blow us clear out of the Channel and fairly into the Atlantic.

The sky was clear and the sun shone bravely, and, though there wasn't much warmth in his rays, the change from the apparently everlasting westerly gales was quite delightful. (I copied that out of a book, but it is quite true, and better than I could write; whenever you see any "high-falutin'" language in my log, you may put it down either as being cribbed, or that Edwards wrote it. He has promised to write lots for me by-and-by.)

Long before four o'clock in the afternoon our friendly breeze fell lighter and lighter, until it died away altogether, leaving the ship floundering about in a most

inconvenient manner. There was wind up above, though ; for I could see a filmy sort of mist that, high above our heads, was flying across the sun's disc. It was coming up from the south, and after a very little time the sun was almost obscured.

By-and-by the captain made his appearance, and after he had glanced aloft and round the horizon he went up and spoke to the mate, for it was our watch on deck, and presently Mr. Harvey sang out for the royals to be clewed up. This was soon done, and a couple of hands went aloft to make them fast.

"What's up, Jack?" I heard one of the men say to Gudgeon, as he belayed the weather fore-royal clew-line.

"Dunno, I'm sure ; perhaps the old man thinks it's going to blow."

"Nothin' like snugging the old canoe down in time if it is," rejoined the other man.

Soon after this a light air sprang up following the direction of the mist, so we hauled the yards round and braced sharp up on the port tack, and by the time the tacks were boarded and the sheets hauled aft a pretty stiff breeze was blowing.

"Lay aft the watch, clew the gaff topsail up!" This was done, and we then hauled down the mizen topmast and top-gallant staysails, the main-royal and top-gallant staysails and the flying jib, and made them fast.

The wind had rapidly increased in force while these sails were being taken in, so the foretop-gallant sail was clewed up immediately after, and the watch went up and stowed it.

I wanted to go aloft with the others, but the mate stopped me, and I went with him to haul in the weather brace, and then I coiled the ropes up and so forth.

After that I went and looked at the clock, and found it was just on the stroke of four, which fact I reported to Mr. Harvey, who told me to strike eight bells and call the other watch. I made rather a hash of the bell, owing to the ship giving a most untimely lurch at a critical part of the performance. However, from first to last I did strike it eight times, which is something, and afterwards I proceeded forward, and opening the fore-castle door, I sang out as loud as I could yell—"Star-board watch, ahoy! Don't you hear the news, eight bells?" as I had heard others do under similar circumstances.

The man whose bunk was nearest the door raised his head, looked over the edge, and said—"Wot was you pleased to remark?" "No, thanks, I've had some," said another; while a third asked me what I meant by talking to gentlemen in that coarse manner; and another, who had turned out, seized me by the arm, dragged me in, and plumped me down on my knees on the deck.

"Now, you small villain," said he, "I'll teach you what to say in future. Listen—'Gentlemen of the starboard watch, eight bells having struck, I humbly request your immedjet presence on deck'—say that."

"I sha'n't say anything of the sort."

"Bravo, boy!" said the man who had first spoken. "Don't hurt him, Bill."

"I ain't hurting on him," laughed the man who was

holding me, as he let me rise. "Here," said he, offering me a pannikin with a little rum in it. "Drink to show there's no ill-feeling." I did so, having first wished good health to the starboard watch, and then fled.

As the wind did not appear to be gaining in violence, no more sail was taken off the ship for the present, though she really had as much as she could stagger under.

I hoped to have been able to carry on with my yarn without bothering you with any details and descriptions, but I now find it is necessary to insert a few explanations. I will make them as brief as possible, and you may skip them if you like.

The *Albatross* is a clipper-barque of 722 tons register ; she is bound to Hong Kong with a general cargo ; next destination unknown ; but the prevailing impression is that we shall proceed to Foochow, and there load tea for England. This is pretty certain, in fact.

The captain's name is John Lawford Bowes ; he is a short, thick-set man, about forty years old. His beard is rather grey, and his face is the colour of mahogany. It is a determined, resolute-looking face, and altogether he is a splendid specimen of an English merchant captain.

The mate you know by name ; he is of medium height, with a great, red, good-humoured face, and such a pair of shoulders—three feet across, I should think ; he has sandy whiskers which meet underneath his chin, his arms are very long, his voice is like the roar of a lion, and he plays the concertina.

The second mate, Mr. Locke, is rather young—about twenty-two, I should think ; he is a tall, good-looking fellow, with no hair on his face to speak of, though he makes the most of the little that is there. We look upon him as one of ourselves, for he served his time in the *Albatross*.

Edwards you also know by name; he is the biggest man in the ship, though he is only nineteen and a half.

Featherstone is the other senior apprentice ; he is rather younger than Edwards, and I don't like him very much.

Charlie Dawson and I are the other apprentices. I want you to like Charlie Dawson—he is just fifteen. He had scarcely ever been away from home in his life until he came up to London to join the *Albatross*, and, what is more, he never even saw the sea until the other day. His dad is a country parson at some out-of-the-way place down in Leicestershire.

He wasn't a bit sea-sick, though ; and all the time I was below, as helpless as a broken rat-trap, Master Charlie was knocking about the decks with the rest, tugging at a rope one moment, getting in the way and being slung on one side the next, anon flopping about in the lee scuppers smothered in the seething foam, but always "coming up smiling."

The cook and the steward are both darkeys. The carpenter is a Scotchman, and a very quiet and sedate personage as well. The boatswain and all the crew are English.

There, I'm glad that is all over.

I forgot the passengers, though. We have two : one is a doctor, the other is a nondescript sort of an animal ; you will know more about them both hereafter—that is, if you have the patience to read my log.

“It strikes me,” said Edwards, as we went below at eight o’clock, “that we shall not finish our watch below in peace and quietness ; I shall turn in all standing, like a trooper’s horse, and if you take my advice you will do the same.”

It seemed to me but a few minutes after—though in reality four bells had struck—when the door was dashed open, and I heard Featherstone shout, ‘ Hands shorten sail—gale of wind coming ! ’

Edwards was out like a shot, and I wasn’t far behind him. For some few moments, though, I stood quite dazed and bewildered, for the night was as dark as the grave, and the air seemed alive with the wild throbbing and shrieking of the heavy blasts as they swept past the ship, appearing to drive her over the surging waves like a flake of their own spindrift.

The watch were hauling up the weather gear of the mainsail, and overhead the great sail was slatting and flouncing with a noise like thunder ; altogether, such a din !

Our watch soon came tumbling aft to their assistance, and we got the mainsail hauled snugly up as quickly as possible.

Both topsail halliards had been let go, so we hauled taut the spilling lines and then went and hauled the foresail up, reefed and stowed it. Our watch furled the

upper fore-topsail, and the others did the same at the main, and then all hands got on the mainyard, picked the sail up, and made it fast.

As soon as everybody was down from aloft we got the order from the skipper (who was in charge of the ship) to brace the mainyard up, starboard braces. The head braces were next manned, and at the first favourable opportunity the ship was cleverly rounded to, for all this time we had been driving away for the North Pole before a perfect tempest of wind.

The ship was now hove to on the port tack, under her two lower topstails and fore-topmast staysail—for the starboard watch had taken in the rest of the canvas before we were called—and, being almost stationary, we got the full force of the wind ; it was tremendous ; while now and again, added to its bellowing and screeching, would come the thunder of a mighty wave crashing against our weather bow, sending a column of hissing spray right over the foreyard, and making our good ship quiver to her remotest timber.

I was crawling aft after the lee fore brace was belayed, when a sea broke clean over the weather rail, flinging tons of green water on the decks which came sweeping along like an avalanche, and carried me floundering down to leeward. It was some little time before I quite knew whether I could still consider myself one of the ship's company, or whether I was on detached service and overboard. Eventually, though, my feet landed on the solid deck—much to my relief—and I was emerging, coughing and spluttering, and half-drowned,

when I saw the mate crawling for'ard, holding on by the weather pin rail, so I made the best of my way after him. He was yelling something—what it was, neither I nor anybody else could hear—and pointing to the fore-topsail. The men knew what he wanted, though, and so they set to work and clewed the sail up. Then, when the gear had been hauled up as snug as possible, that sail was also furled, and the ship rode much easier, though a terrific sea was raging, filling the air with its flying spume.

When the ropes were coiled up off the decks the steward appeared on the break of the poop, powerfully armed with a jug of grog and a pewter measure, and the men came scrambling aft the best way they could to get their well-earned tots.

When we were mustered Charlie was missing. "Good Lord," said Mr. Locke, "where's the other boy? I fell over him not long ago."

"Oh," said the boatswain, "I forgot him. I was afeard he'd be blowed to bits, or washed overboard, so I opened the door and hove him into my berth—I'll go and fetch him."

Presently he reappeared with Charlie, and after the men had had their grog we were graciously allowed half a tot each.

"Don't talk to me about coffee, when I'm cold and wet," said Edwards, in reply to an observation Featherstone had just made on the subject. "I'd give a bucketful of it for three fingers of the right stuff, on a night like this.'

It was now nearly one o'clock, so the wheel was relieved, and the starboard watch went below.

The wind by now had slightly moderated, and though it still blew very hard, there was not such seemingly relentless fury in the blasts. The sky, too, had cleared somewhat, and a pale, sickly-looking moon peered out occasionally from amongst the masses of scudding clouds.

There being nothing to do on deck, Edwards and I went towards our berth with the intention of shifting into some dry clothes, and at the corner of the house we met Charlie, looking very dismal.

"Oh!" he cried, "have you seen our cabin? It's full of water, and the chests are swimming about; I'm going to get two buckets to bale it out with, and Featherstone has gone to do something or the other that will let the water run away."

"That's your fault," said Edwards to me, "you forgot to shut the door when all hands were called. Come, come! don't look so piteously dismal about it," he continued, "you don't know everything, though you are a bold *Worcester* boy; go and lend Charlie a hand with the buckets, and I'll see if Featherstone has found the plug."

We soon got the water out, but oh! what a state everything was in! The clothes at the top of my chest were fortunately dry, though there was an ominous squelch when I put my hand down at one corner.

Charlie's chest was a slop-made affair, a sort of sister-ship to mine, and so most of his clothes were wet,

but the other two were quite water-tight, and as dry as a bone inside, which was probably a lucky thing for me.

Edwards got his dry clothes on first, and then he went out on deck, telling me to follow him as quickly as I could.

As soon as he was gone, Featherstone commenced to rave at me for leaving the door open, and then he set to and boxed my ears, until I felt quite warm and comfortable ; so having put my oilskins on over my dry clothes, I went out and joined the mate and Edwards, who were crouching under the lee of a weather cloth that was seized to the mizen rigging.

"Well, Tommy," said the mate, making room for me beside him, "how do you like the navy now, and aren't you sorry you joined the regiment?"

"Well, I don't like being sick, and I don't like carrying part of a huge wave about with me, down my back and in my sea-boots, and I don't like lots of other things," I replied, mentally referring to the long-boat and the brass-work.

"In fact, you wouldn't sell a farm to go to sea?" asked Mr. Harvey, smiling.

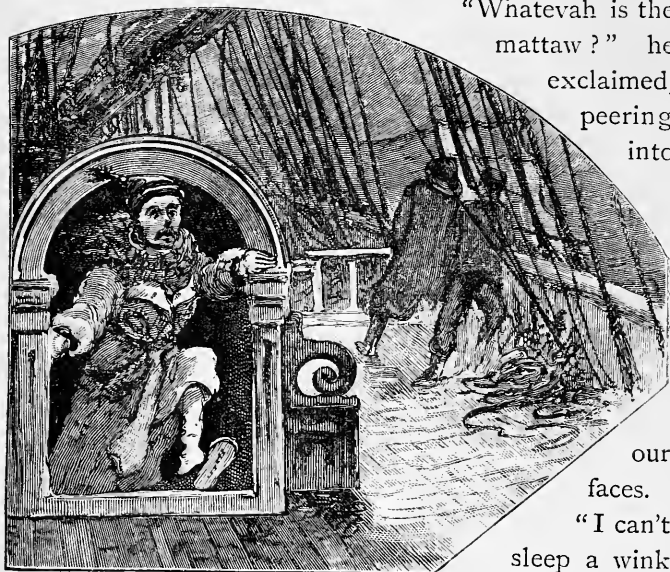
I was about to answer him, when our attention was attracted to a strange figure that just then emerged from the companion.

"Here's one of the passengers," said the mate.

The personage in question slowly gained the deck, and after clinging to the cabin door for a few moments, during which we had time to observe his appearance, he

came staggering over to where we were sitting, and planted himself down alongside the mate.

I never saw a more laughable object ; he had on a long dressing-gown, a shawl was twined round his neck, and on his head was a nightcap with a huge tassel attached to it.



PASSENGER APPEARING.

"Whatevah is the mattaw ?" he exclaimed, peering into

our faces.

"I can't sleep a wink with all this

howwid thumping and bumping ; cannot it be stopped by any means ?"

"Well," replied the mate, "the seas striking the ship make the noise you complain of ; perhaps this young man (alluding to me) can assist you. I saw him not more than an hour ago take a heavy wave on his shoulders, which he carried down to leeward and then

threw overboard. I dare say he can keep the worst of them away from the ship with a boathook if he tries." (All this as sober as a judge.)

"My deah young fwiend," said the passenger to me, "I should weally be vewy gwatified and gwa-gwateful to you if you could by any means stop the dweadful thumping. I am keeping a log of this eventful cwuise, which I shall publish when we awwive at Hong Kong. It does not contain vewy much as yet, for I have been too hideously sick to wite, but this incident shall certainly be made known to the world, and the bwave boy who beat off the waging billows with a—a—"

"Boathook," said the mate.

"Thank you; yes, a boathook—shall live in his countwy's litewature." He then turned to go below, but happening to look aloft, he exclaimed, "Whatevah have you done with the sails? they are quite altered."

"Oh!" replied the irrepressible mate, "we generally take them down at night, and hang them up again in the morning, all but those two"—pointing to the topsail and staysail—"we leave them up to scare away the gulls."

"Do you weally! how vewy peculiaw! I must we-membaw this too for my log." With that he wished us good-night, and went off.

When he was fairly out of sight Edwards and I looked at each other, and then shrieked with laughter.

"Don't make such a row," said the mate, "or you'll waken all the rats." Then he pulled my ear, and, telling me I was grinning like a monkey chewing a hot spud, walked off and squinted into the binnacle.

By-and-by he came back and said, "Boy, go and cut up a pipe of tobacco for me ; you will find a plug on the shelf where my sextant is, and a knife alongside it. There's a pipe sculling about there somewhere ; fill it, light it, and fetch it here as quick as your sins will let you."

I executed this important commission in a satisfactory manner, and when I came back Mr. Harvey told me to look at the clock. It was five minutes to four.

"I don't think this breeze is going to last much longer," observed the mate. "It doesn't blow so hard as it did, and the sea seems to be going down. We'll let the other watch make sail on her ; maybe they'll want something to amuse themselves with."

"Make it eight bells now ; if it ain't four o'clock it ought to be."

After striking the bell I went and called Featherstone and Charley.

"I say, Tommy," said the latter, putting his legs out of the bunk and slowly sliding down until his feet landed on the floor, "I didn't think the sea was quite like this, did you ? I don't like it very much so far," he continued, as he buttoned his monkey-jacket, "though perhaps it will be nicer when the weather gets warmer."

"Put your oilskins on over all," said I ; "you won't feel the cold a bit if you do."

"Oh dear ! I don't know where they are ; sprawling about down there, I think," he added, pointing hopelessly to a jumble of wet clothes and gear under the lee bunk.

"Put on mine, then," said I. "They'll keep you warm

just as well ; only mind you don't fall overboard with them on, for I haven't another suit."

"Tommy," he suddenly exclaimed, as he finished putting on his sea-boots, "it's my birthday to-day, and I'm fifteen."

"Is it really, old boy?" said I. "Then let me be the first to wish you many happy returns of the day," whereupon we shook hands and I turned in.

We all went to breakfast together at seven bells ; the reason why the usual custom was departed from on this occasion being that at eight o'clock all hands were to make sail.

The wind had subdued its violence almost as quickly as it had risen ; moreover, it had shifted slowly round the compass from south to west, finally remaining steady at north-west, from which point a brisk and fresh little breeze was now blowing cheerily along, whilst overhead was a blue sky sparsely flaked with fine-weather clouds.

Mr. Locke had wore ship with the watch at four bells ; since then they had set the mainsail, the foresail, the lower fore-topsail, the spanker and gaff topsail, and all the jibs and staysails.

They had also loosed the other sails, and when eight bells were struck the mate came along, shouting, "Main topsail halliards ! let go your top-gallant sheets, topsail spilling lines and reef-tackles !"

"All gone, sir !"

"Hoist away, then ; long drags, a fathom a drag. Sing out, somebody !"

And Jack Gudgeon started a *shanty*—

“ Oh, blow, my boys, and blow together ;
Blow, boys, blow !
For the wind is fair, and we’ve got fine weather ;
Blow, my bonny boys, blow ! ”

And so on, making it up as he went along, I suppose.

Then on the fore-topsail halliards we had “ Reuben Ransole,” and “ Whiskey Johnny,” and “ Boney was a warrior,” when the top-gallant sails came to be set in their turn. As for the royals, we simply walked them up.

“ Stamp and go, boys ! ” sang out the mate. “ Stick your toes in the mud and start the waggon ! ” and when they were set, “ That’ll do the watch ; relieve the wheel ; cast the stunsail booms adrift our side ; jump down into the forepeak a couple of hands, and get the gear up.”

“ Boy, skip out on the weather foreyard arm, unhook the topsail clew-line, and overhaul the block down on deck. Got a knife to cut the mousing ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Up you go, then.”

It took us until noon to rig out the booms, reeve the stunsail gear, and bend the sails to the yards ready for hoisting. The mate was like a wild bull the whole time ; you could hear his voice all over the ship—ay, and five miles off, I verily believe—now down in the sail locker, then upon the top-gallant forecastle roaring to some one aloft, and flying about like a piece of paper in a windy corner, as I heard Jack Gudgeon remark.

At eight bells the other watch came out, and we set to and hoisted all the stunsails—fore lower, topmast,

and top-gallant and royal stunsails. Then we in our turn went below to dinner, and the starboard watch crossed the main skysail yard and set the sail.

Featherstone and Charlie had turned all the wet clothes out on deck, and they were drying famously in the warm sunshine. My bed, though, which was fortunately the only one that had suffered during last night's inundation, was still very damp, so I coaxed the old cook to let me put it in front of the galley fire, and it was soon steaming away like a washerwoman's copper. While I was turning it about to expose all the damp places to the heat, Jack Gudgeon put his head in at the door.

"'Ullo, doctor, wot's up now?" he exclaimed to the cook, who was sitting on the edge of his bunk with his legs dangling down in front—he slept in the galley. "Why, you d—d old savage! you wouldn't so much as let me hang up my coat in the galley, not more'n ten minutes ago, and now here's the beefsteak tart for the old man's dinner a-waiting patiently, and business come to a dead stop while the boy dries his bed!"

"You tink I can't do what I like in my own galley?" rejoined the cook. "Suppose I like to gib the boy leabe to dry his bed, what odds dat to you? Go hang your dam old coat on forestay, like oder sailor man."

"Keep your wool on, old son," said Jack, sententiously, as he walked away.

My bed was now quite dry, and after I had taken it back to its place I returned to the galley and begged hard to be allowed to bring Jack's coat and dry it in the

same way. The old cook would not hear of it at first, but by-and-by he gave in, and then, having received a grumbling permission, I went up on the forecastle and brought it down. There was no mistaking old Jack Gudgeon's coat ; it was a tremendously heavy affair, with "4th D. Gds." embroidered on the shoulder straps.

It soon dried in front of the fire, and then I took it back and hung it up again on the forestay.

Just as I had finished Jack happened to come up. "What's the caper now?" said he. "Do you know that precious garment you're a meddling with acts as my oilskins, monkey jacket, bed and blanket ?

"Oh, you've been a-drying of it by the galley fire, have you?" he continued, feeling it to see if I was telling the truth. "I thought perhaps you wanted to buy it for pussonal use o' cold nights—'twould about fit you like a pusser's coat on a handspike ; howsomever, now it is dry we'll take it down below.

"You're a good boy to think of drying the old coat," he remarked, as he untied the knots. "Perhaps I can do a good turn for you some day—Jack Gudgeon ain't the man to forget a kindness.

"What's your name, sonny?" he asked, as we walked away.

"Tommy Davie."

"Wery well, run away now, Tommy, and turn in ; I seen you, and that other little chap too, knocking about the decks last night, when plenty of boys that I've been shipmates with—a lump bigger'n you, too—would have crawled back into their bunks. And come for'ard in the

second dog-watch," said he, as I was going away, "and be interdoosed to your watch-mates, which oughter took place before."

After tea the captain sent a message to Charlie and me by the steward, to say that he wished to see us in his cabin ; and of course we went off at once, wondering whatever we were wanted for.

When we got down into the saloon, a door at the other end opened, and the captain appeared. He beckoned, and we went to him, through the doorway and into his private cabin.

"I have sent for you two boys," he said, speaking kindly, for I suppose he could see we were rather nervous, "to tell you, first of all, that I am very pleased to have had exceedingly good reports of both of you from the officers, as to your behaviour during the short time you have been in the ship. Besides this, I have drawn similar conclusions from what I have myself seen—for, let me tell you, very little that goes on escapes my notice. I was especially pleased," he continued, "to see that during the bad weather last night, neither of you left the deck while it was your duty to be there ; though I am bound to say," he smilingly said, "that I should have been easier in my mind if I had known you were safe in your bunks.

"I wanted more especially, though, to talk to you about your duties here. I regret very much that all the dirty work, cleaning brass-work and the like, should fall on your shoulders ; and I know that to boys brought up as you have been it is very distasteful, to say the least of it.

Still it must be done ; somebody must do it. The men have quite enough of their own work to do now that all merchant ships are sent short-handed to sea ; the only consolation I can offer you is, that myself and the other officers of this ship had to commence learning our profession by doing just the same duties as those you now have to perform.

"I do not wish you to be on visiting terms with the men," he continued, after a pause ; "you have to learn your profession principally from them, and it is impossible to work in company with a man one minute, and hold aloof from him the next. But for all that there is a line to be drawn. I must trust to your own discretion not to overstep it."

Here he rang a bell, and ordered the steward, who promptly appeared, to bring a bottle of wine and glasses.

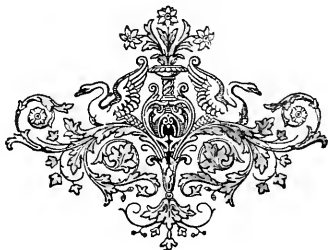
When they were brought the captain poured out, and handed each of us a glass of wine, and then said : "I have finished my serious talk now, so let us drink a pleasant voyage to the *Albatross*."

After we had duly honoured the toast, I, blushing furiously at my own temerity, informed the captain that it was Charlie's birthday, that he had arrived at the mature age of fifteen, and might we drink his health and many happy returns of the day ?

To this he smilingly assented, and proposed the toast himself in a few kindly words ; and after we had drank, I, seeing that the captain looked so perfectly and pleasantly unofficial, boldly proposed *his* health ; and afterwards Charlie, having still about a quarter of a glass

of wine remaining, whispered "Tommy's health," and drank it off.

"Now go on deck, you little oddities," said the captain, shaking hands with us both. So we respectfully bade him good-evening, and then left.





CHAPTER III.

FORECASTLE FUN.

NICKNAMES—SING-SONGS AND SHANTIES—"BOLD DANIELS"—"THE LOWLANDS."

WHEN we re-appeared on the poop, Mr. Locke gave Charlie some small duty to perform, and I went away.

Now I hadn't forgotten that I had promised Gudgeon to come and be introduced to my watch-mates, but I wasn't quite certain in my mind as to whether he really meant it seriously, or was only joking ; however, there wasn't any harm in going to see, so I walked forward along the main deck.

Most of the ship's company were congregated round the fore-hatch, smoking, laughing, talking, and sky-larking, and Jack Gudgeon was leaning against the winch, laying down the law to a few of the men who were lounging about near him.

When I appeared Jack looked round and beckoned to me, so I went up to him.

"I begs to hintrooose this boy of ourn," said he, placing me in front, and laying a hand on each of my shoulders, "to the honourable members of the port-watch—which his name is Tommy Davie." He then named the men separately—Jack Barrett, Tom Herne, Big Tom Walton, and Jack Ross, and I shook hands with them, and lastly with Jack himself. They were very kind, and asked all sorts of questions.

Presently Charlie came along—looking for me, I suppose; and so the men in the other watch pounced on him as their property, and carried him off in triumph.

Then the old cook brought his banjo, and Jack Ross (they all called him "Rocky") fetched a tin whistle out of the fore-castle, and they played away merrily.

Afterwards Charlie, who has a very sweet, clear voice, sang a song, which was vociferously applauded and encored, and when he had finished I danced the sailors' hornpipe on the fore-hatch.

Then there was more singing and music, and the passengers came forward to listen.

"Give us 'Bold Daniels,' Jack," said somebody to Gudgeon. "Ay, 'Bold Daniels,'" exclaimed several others; whereupon Jack commenced, without further pressing, to roar out in his fine powerful voice:

On the twenty-first of August last, from Plymouth we set sail;
Old Neptune he did favour us with a brisk and pleasant gale.
Our ship is the *Roving Elizabeth*, "Bold Daniels" our captain's name,
And we're bound down to Le Guyaree,[†] all on the Spanish Main.

[†] La Guayra, South America.

Now when we arrived at Le Guyaree, our orders ran just so—
To dis-charge part of our cargo, and proceed to Callao.
And our captain he call-ed all hands right aft, and unto us did say—
"Brave boys, here's money for you to spend, to-morrow we're bound away!"

Now we'd scarce been sailed from Le Guyaree but days just two or three,
When a man from our foretopmast-head a strange sail he did see,
With a black flag under his mizen-peak came bearing down our way,
"G—d d—n it! She is a pirate!" Bold Daniels he did say.

About half-past nine the next morning, that pirate hove up alongside.
With a loud, large speaking-trumpet, "Where are you bound?" he cried.
And our captain who walk-ed the quarter-deck, he answered him just so,
"This is the ship from Le Guyaree, bound down to Callao."

"Now back your main-topsail, and heave to under my lee!"
"I'll see you d—d," said Daniels, "I would rather sink at sea!"
So the pirate he up with his blood-red flag, our hearts to terrify,
With our small arms to their large guns we into each other let fly.

We hoisted up our English flag, and fired a broadside then—
The pirate carried twenty guns, a crew one hundred men.
Our guns was but six four-pounders, our crew but twenty-two,
"Brave boys, we'll board her!" Bold Daniels cried, "Come follow me,
Britons true!"

We turned their guns upon them, those pirates for to slay,
Though for quarter and for quarter, for quarter they did pray;
So we hauléd down their blood-red flag, likewise the colours of black,
And gave three cheers as up to her peak we hoisted the Union Jack.

Now since a rich prize we've taken all on Columbia's shore,
We'll steer a straight course to America, to the city of Baltimore;
And we'll drink success to Bold Daniels, likewise to his noble crew,
For he fought and beat that pirate with his gallant twenty-two.

As soon as Jack had finished this song, old Barrett
began, without being asked, to chant the adventures of a
certain Mr. Brennam, who appears to have been a high-
way robber. The chorus was the only part of it that I
remember; it was very funny, and went thus—

"Brennam on the moor."

Then, a few notes higher and louder, as though the correctness of the statement had been questioned—

“Brennam on the moor.”

Then, with an energetic burst, and triumphantly, as though all doubts had been dispelled—

“Bold and undaunted stood brave Brennam on the moor.”

And so, merrily and pleasantly, the evening passed all too quickly away, until by-and-by eight bells struck, and the mate came along shouting, “Lee fore-brace!” and had the yards canted about a quarter of an inch, I should think.

And Charlie said it was his birthday party, and that he thought he should like the sea after all.

How funny it is that sailors will not call people by their proper names! They haven’t disturbed mine—but then you see it isn’t really my proper name, so they continue to call me Tommy. Nearly everybody else in the ship has had a nickname of some sort or another served out to him by now. Jack Gudgeon is “Corporal,” because of his soldier’s coat, I suppose. Then amongst the others are “Rocky,” “Long Jack,” and “Irish.” Jack Barrett, who is a very little man, is “Monster,” and one unfortunate, who is frightfully ugly, is dubbed “Nasty-face,” with which arrangement he appears perfectly contented.

The captain, the carpenter, and the cook, are called, as in all other ships, “The old man,” “Chippy,” and “Doctor,” respectively; and everybody calls Charlie.

"Baby," because he is the youngest and most insignificant of all.

He and I were weighed the other day, for the purpose of settling a bet of a plug of tobacco made between two of the crew as to which was the heavier.

The steelyards used for weighing out the salt meat were quite extensive enough for our purpose, and eventually Charlie was found to be 6 st. 4 lb., while I kicked the beam at 6 st. 7½ lb.

We two are very fond of sitting under the quarter of the long-boat and chattering by the hour, whenever we have the chance. That isn't very often.

One evening, when we were stowed away in our favourite haunt, Charlie suddenly exclaimed, "I wonder why nearly all the things in a ship have such terribly hard names. For instance, main-topgallant-staysail-downhaul,—there's a mouthful for you! and the block it goes through is the main-topgallant-staysail-downhaul-block, and heaps of others are just as bad.

"If I had my way," he continued, looking very wise, and shaking his head, "I should have the foremast called A, and the mainmast B, and the mizenmast would be C. Then the foresail would be A 1, and the foretopsail A 2, and so on. Wouldn't it be funny to hear the mate order us to clew up A 4 and B 5, and haul down C 4, B 7, and A 6? It would be like algebra.

"Did you ever learn algebra, Tommy?" he asked. "My dad used to make me grind away at it. He's a parson, you know, and very, very clever."

Then he went on to tell me of the rectory, down in

some country village in Leicestershire, and of the old grey church, with its huge buttresses and narrow, pointed windows ; of its steeple, which was quite covered with ivy, and of the old elm-trees in the little churchyard, where the rooks cawed away so pleasantly. And so forth.

He told me, too, of his sister May, a year and a half younger than he, whom he made me promise to marry when we were both grown up.

And then he on his part entered into a similar matrimonial arrangement with me (acting on behalf of my sister Annie, who, being the youngest, had been called Baby from her infancy upwards). "The two Babies, you see," said I. All as nice as possible.

And the huge, swelling sails, towering so placidly overhead ; the rustling whisper of the breeze ; the murmuring, rippling wash of the sea, as the ship glides gently along ; the hum of the men's voices coming soft and subdued from the fore-castle-head, with now and then a laugh ringing sharply and clearly out, and Jack Gudgeon's voice calling us—which we pretend not to hear, and snuggle closer in under the boat. Then we hear his heavy tread coming along the deck—for he knows where to find us, bless you—and we are captured and led for'ard to sing and dance, which we do with great success and much applause.

Afterwards the cook sings a song—with a pink-a-ponk banjo accompaniment—of how he worked in the cotton fields away down south, and his head was as big as the rest of his mouth, and the niggers all a-dancin', turnin' out their toes, and the yaller gals a-prancin', shakin'

out their clothes—making such funny grimaces all the while he is singing that everybody roars with laughter.

Then Rocky imitates the bagpipes on his tin whistle, and manages somehow to groan so dismally all the time that the old Scotch carpenter can stand it no longer, and shouting, "Hech, mon! its joust pairfect—gi' us the skirl agen!" dashes on to the fore-hatch and executes the Highland fling in grand style, amidst shouts of applause.

And when that is all over, Baby is pressed to sing another sentimental song—sailors are fond of sentimental songs—and he obliges the company with "Annie Laurie," singing it so sweetly that you would have heard a pin drop until the last note died away—ay, and after that too.

And then Jack Gudgeon gives us another of his old sea-songs, "The lowlands, low." There is a fine rousing chorus to it, which the men shout out in splendid style—giving it lip, as they call it. These are the words, as nearly as I can remember :

There once was a ship, and a ship was she,
And she went by the name of the Golden Vanitee.
I'm afraid she will be taken by the Turkish enemeë,
Who will sink her in the lowlands—

Lowlands,
Who will sink her in the lowlands low.

Now the first to speak up was a little cabin-boy,
"Oh what will you give me that ship to destroy?"
"Oh I will give you silver, and I will give you gold,
If you'll sink her in the lowlands—

Lowlands,
If you'll sink her in the lowlands low."

The boy bent his back, and away swam he,
And he swam right off to the Turkish enemie ;
And in her side he bored holes, he bored holes just three,
And he sunk her in the lowlands—

Lowlands,
And he sunk her in the lowlands low.

The boy bent his back, and back swam he,
And he swam right back to the Golden Vanitee.
“Oh ! shipmates, pick me up, for I’m sinking in the sea ;
I am sinking in the lowlands—

Lowlands,
I am sinking in the lowlands low.”

They picked him up on deck, but upon the deck he died,
So they sewed him in his hammock that was so deep and wide ;
And from the starboard gangway they hove him in the tide,
And they sunk him in the lowlands—

Lowlands,
And they sunk him in the lowlands low.

And when the applause following Jack’s song had ceased, Tom Walton sang a very dismal ditty of how a certain fair maid fell in love with somebody or other who was foolish enough to go to the wars and get killed. So the fair maid (I can’t give you her name, for it isn’t even mentioned in the song) wasted away ; and as she didn’t waste away as quickly as she wanted to, she drowned as much of herself as remained, after a lengthy course of the wasting business, in the millstream.

There isn’t any chorus to this song—which is in a blood-curdling minor key—so the men sing “Rule Britannia” after each verse to make up for the deficiency. It sounds so funny—though they evidently don’t see it—especially the last verse, which goes something like this :

As time went by that fair maid pinéd,
She pinéd as the days went by,
And with her lily-white hand she signéd
A letter to say that she must die.
Then to the millstream she did go-o,
And plungéd in the waters there.
Her sleeping form lies deep below-o ;
Oh, Heaven ! receive that maid so fair.

Then—

Rule Britannia ; Britannia rules the waves,
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.

I think it is simply *lovely*.

And so on until the inevitable “eight bells” comes tinkling from aft, and is answered sonorously by the big bell on the forecastle head, when the merry party breaks up to haul aft the main-sheet, which is already as tight as hands can drag it.

And when we have all got hold of the rope, Jack Gudgeon (he is our great shanty man) commences to sing—“Haul on the bowlin’, the packet ship’s a rollin’. Haul on the bowlin’, the bowlin’ HAUL !” And the passengers beg the mate not to belay just yet, for they like to hear the men sing ; so he lets us go on until, with a tremendous expenditure of energy, we have hauled in about three inches and slacked up a foot, and then he stops us with, “Belay, belay all that ! Relieve the wheel.”



CHAPTER IV.

IN THE TROPICS.

BILLY LOONEY AND THE SEA-SERPENT—HOW'S HER HEAD?—A TALE
OF A TUB—DEAD CALM—FISH FOR BREAKFAST—JACK SHARK.

IT was our watch on deck from eight to twelve the night before we lost the north-east trade winds. There was scarcely enough weight in the breeze to keep the sails quiet, and every now and again the great mainsail would collapse and fall listlessly against the mast for a moment, and then swell out again, tautening the sheets with a jerk that made the clewgarnet blocks rattle and the reef points patter like a shower of hail.

The sea was very phosphorescent, and I leant over the lee poop-rail, gazing with admiration at the flashing, swirling water as the ship churned it up.

The mate was on the weather side, talking to the passenger who came on deck that night when we were hove to, and who has been dubbed "Billy Looney" since then by common consent. He is a Billy Looney, too!

Presently Mr. Harvey came over to me and whispered, "Tommy, pay the end of the main-brace overboard—quietly, so that no one hears you do it, and then heave the bight over the brace-bumkin so the line will tow clear of the ship. Do you understand?"

I nodded.

"All right, then; and when you've done that go down into my berth and fetch up the concertina. It's in a box on the shelf over my bunk. Put it behind the companion."

Then he grinned and poked me in the ribs, so I knew some devilment was up.

I did as I was told, and let the coil of the main-brace run overboard, and upon my word the result was startling—for it looked like a monstrous fiery snake wriggling along in our wake, and where the rope came out of the water and made a splash was a perfect resemblance of an open mouth vomiting flames.

Then I crept up to listen. "Yes," I heard the mate say, "I fell across the sea-serpent once in my life—and I don't want to see him again, I can tell you. It was just about where we are now, and I was in a little brig bound to Bombay. We were heading about north-east, half-south, with a fair wind on the lee quarter. Have you got that down?"

"Oh yes," replied Billy Looney, who was scribbling shorthand by the light of the binnacle. "I'm witing away as hard as evah I can; pway pwocced."

"Well, we clewed up the flying-jib at seven bells in the first dog-watch, and then double-reefed the gaff top-

sail. I was standing on the break of the poops, spilling the sail by the lifts and bowlines, when I saw a most horrible-looking monster, projicking¹ about on the weather-beam. It was an enormous serpent. About twenty fathoms of its body was standing straight out of the water, and it seemed to be about as big round as a good large tree. At the top was its head——”

“How big was that?”

“Oh, well, I should say it was about the same size as our long-boat. I sang out to the men to lay down from aloft, but before they had time to get into the rigging the monster seized the ship in its teeth by the mainmast, just underneath the top, and lifted her right out of the water, shaking her like a dog worrying a rat. Got that?”

“Oh, yes; how deeply intewesting!”

“Men and boats and garbage of all descriptions came tumbling overboard like peas out of a bag! I luckily managed to get hold of a backstay, and held on like grim death to a dead sojer, and after a minute or so I felt the ship thrown violently through the air. She fortunately pitched in the water right side uppermost, but there wasn't a soul of the watch on deck left except me.”

“All dwowned?”

“Every man jack of them!”

“When I picked myself up and looked round the monster had disappeared, but it left one of its teeth

¹ This is a favourite word with the mate; he is always using it. I don't know what it means.—T. D.

sticking in the mainmast—such a tooth, too ! it measured two feet from end to end, and weighed a quarter of a hundredweight.”

Here the mate paused, and the man at the wheel—who was very probably in the plot—sang out excitedly, “ Mr. Harvey ! Good Lord preserve us ! What’s this ? ”

The mate and Billy Looney rushed to the stern, and—there was my serpent !

The poor passenger was fairly terrified out of his few wits, and was for rushing below ; but the mate seized his arm and told him not to be scared, for it was only a young one.

“ Oh ! ” said Billy, in a state of abject terror. “ Pway thwow it something to eat, and pwhaps it will swim away.”

“ No, no,” replied Mr. Harvey, “ we’ll catch him ! ” and with that he sang out to me to run for the harpoon, and be smart about it.

I soon returned with a harpoon and line, and the mate stood up and hove it into the sea, while poor Billy Looney fled to the companion, ready for a bolt below.

“ I’ve got him ! Come here, Tommy, and lend me a hand with the line ! ” shouted Mr. Harvey, excitedly ; and we both made a great to-do, and pretended to be hauling away at something that was giving us no end of trouble.

“ Come and give us a pull, Mr. Simkins ” (that is Billy Looney’s real name), “ or else he’ll run away with us ! ”

There was no answer to this appeal, for the passenger had rushed below.

We had a quiet grin, and then the mate told me to run for'ard and fetch one of the big baskets that the potatoes came in, while he hauled in the rope. So I brought one and set it down by the mizen rigging, and Mr. Harvey went and told the passenger that the serpent was captured, and securely caged in a basket on deck ; and after a lot of persuasion he was prevailed upon to come up and look at it.

And I held the lid of the basket down, while Mr. Harvey stood behind me with his concertina under his arm so that it wasn't visible, and Silly Billy came with much fear and trembling to see the serpent.

"Now open the lid a little bit."

I raised it very slowly, and Mr. Simkins was just cautiously peering in, when the mate made his concertina roar so hideously, that even I dropped the lid and fled ; and as for poor Billy, he simply dived head first down the companion way, and fell all of a heap at the bottom.

"Strike four bells," said Mr. Harvey, as serious as a judge.

Then the captain came on deck to know what all the noise had been about, and Mr. Harvey told him of our sea-serpent. "Don't carry it too far," said he, laughing heartily, and going below again

"Come here, Tommy ; can you steer ?"

"Yes, sir—that is, with a tiller, you know ; I never tried with a wheel, but I can box the compass."

"Can you, though ? Then how many points are there?"

"Thirty-four, sir."

"Ah, indeed ; pray name them. Commence at nor'-west and by west, and go northerly."

So I repeated the points all round the card, completing the circuit at nor'-nor'-west.

"Well," said the mate, "you have only named thirty-two."

"Yes, sir, but then there are the lubber's point, and the needle point, upon which the card revolves."

"Why, Edwards," laughed the mate (Edwards was at the wheel), "the boy is a regular old shellback! Come now, my young sprig of nobility, say 'Sou'-west and by south half-south a little southerly.'"

I repeated it.

"Now put another S to it, and you shall steer until eight bells."

"Sou'-west and by south half-south a little southerly—*sir*," said I, triumphantly.

"Let go the wheel to me, Edwards," laughed the mate, seating himself on the spindle, and drawing me towards him. "Now, my ancient mariner, can you see into the binnacle?"

"Not quite, sir," said I, standing on tiptoe.

"Well, I can then," rejoined Mr. Harvey, "and what's more, I see that the ship is half a point off her course, and coming to at that."

"I couldn't help it, sir," said Edwards ; "I haven't been able to keep her steady since I heard about your sea-serpent."

"Very well ; go for'ard and get something for the boy to stand upon."

When he was out of earshot, the mate laughed and said, "Edwards is the best wheel in the ship, and I like to take a rise out of him when I get the chance."

By-and-by Edwards returned with a washing-tub, which he placed bottom upwards behind the wheel, and then Mr. Harvey said, "Now stand up there, you little sixpenn'orth of ha'pence ; can you see the card now ?"

Yes, I could see it beautifully.

"How's her head, then ?"

"Sou'-sou'-west, sir."

"Very well, that's the course. Now take hold of the wheel—Edwards, you can go below and get a smoke if you like."

Then Mr. Harvey showed me how turning the wheel to port affected the rudder in the same way as putting a tiller to starboard, and *vice versa*, which I very quickly mastered.

"A good helmsman," he continued, "does not steer with his eyes stuck in the binnacle the whole time ; he gets the ship steady on her course, and then, if it is night and the sky is clear, he selects a convenient star and steers by that, keeping it just clear of the weather-leach of the mainsail, for instance, or wherever else a noticeable star may happen to be. And in the daytime he looks at the horizon, or a bit of cloud, and he can thus tell when the ship is leaving her course long before the compass card will inform him—and a spoke or two one way or the other will fetch her back.

"If ever you see a man heaving the wheel round and working like a navvy, put him down as no helmsman.

"See how important it is," said he, "for if every man here could steer as well as Edwards we should certainly shorten our passage to Hong Kong by a day or two.

"Now look at that bright star just in a line with the fore-topmast-stunsail-yard—you see the ship is exactly on her course by the compass ; so all you have to do is to keep that star where it is, just glancing at the compass occasionally, of course—for stars are much alike, and that one even is changing its position as the earth revolves. By-and-by you will have to pick out another one."

He then left me at the wheel, and walked up and down the poop, just looking into the binnacle now and again as he passed, and every time the S.S.W. point was exactly under the centre mark, and our wake astern, clearly defined in the phosphorescent water, stretched away in the distance as straight as an arrow—and I thought how easy it is to steer.

Presently Mr. Harvey stopped in his march and said, "I'm just going below to cut up a pipe of tobacco, so you'll be left in charge of the ship. See how nicely you can steer her along."

And I was left alone at the wheel.

After a very little while a wretched cloud came and hid my star, and I couldn't see another convenient one for a moment or so, and then when I looked at the card I was horrified to find that the ship was half a point off her course. I turned the wheel a few spokes, but the error became larger, and, instead of sou'-sou'-west she

was heading south by west, and going farther astray every second.

Then I lost my head, and, forgetting all the mate had told me, hove the wheel round quite a turn and a half. That fetched her back, though—but then she went as far wrong the other way, and headed south-west ; and just as I was trying to get her right with, I dare say, two turns of starboard helm, Mr. Harvey reappeared on deck, to my great relief, and came sauntering along towards me. He just glanced at the compass, and then said, in the sweetest voice imaginable—

“Has the captain been on deck and altered the course? Put the helm amidships,” he continued, interrupting me as I was trying to stammer out an explanation. “Don’t be frightened ; why, you’re trembling like a leaf. I knew how it would be, and I’ve been standing on the stairs, watching you pro-jicking with the wheel the whole time! How’s her head now?”

“Sou’-sou’-west, half west, sir.”

“Yes, and she’s coming to very quickly ; so meet her with half a turn of weather helm, or you’ll very soon have her a point or two wrong the other way. There now,” said he, as the ship got about half a point to windward of her course and stuck there, “she won’t go any farther ; she carried two spokes of weather helm when she was steady before, and you’ve now got half a turn ; meet her as she falls off with one at a time, so that when she is on her course again you will just have the two spokes left. Watch her! Never mind the

compass—look at that star. See, there she goes ; now meet her.”

Slowly the ship's head fell off, and very slowly the lubber's point crept along until it reached S.S.W., and there it stuck.

“Don't forget your lesson,” said the mate, walking away.

Presently he looked at the clock, and then came and struck eight bells.

“Now go and call Mr. Locke and the two apprentices. I'll steer until you come back. Don't be long.”

When I returned he gave me the wheel again, and told me to be sure to give the course to the man who would presently relieve me.

Then Mr. Locke came on deck and took a turn or two up and down with the mate ; he stopped once to look at the compass, and had the impertinence to laugh at me and compare me to a tomtit standing on a bundle of sticks.

I didn't mind that, though, for the ship was exactly on her course, and her wake stretched away far astern in a perfectly straight line.

Then the man whose next wheel it was came stumbling aft along the lee side, and when he relieved me I gave him the course—which he repeated with a grin, and I took my tub and went off.

“Baby, I've been steering for more than an hour !”

“Have you really !” he exclaimed, looking at me with admiration. “I wish I might try. Mr. Locke told me the names of the points that are stuck all round that

whirligig thing in the compass; but they are so tiresome, and I shall never be able to remember them."

"Ask Mr. Locke if we may go into his cabin, where we sha'n't disturb anybody," said I, "and I'll teach you their names in no time."

"What, now?"

"Yes; I don't want to turn in for a little while."

Charlie got permission from Mr. Locke, and we were very soon deep in the mysteries of the compass-card.

Presently some one came to the door; we looked up, and there was the captain.

"What's all this chattering about?" he asked.

"We are learning the compass, sir," I replied.

"Indeed," said he, kindly; "perhaps I can help you." And with that he came in and explained everything so clearly, that Charlie soon had the points at his fingers' ends.

"Now I suppose you want to go and steer?" said he to Charlie; and then added, with a smile, "See if you cannot do better than some one in the other watch who got the ship two points off her course." And I coloured up, and wondered how he knew.

So it ended in my tub being again requisitioned, and when I went to turn in, Baby was perched upon it steering the ship, with the second mate standing beside him.

"Now then!" exclaimed Edwards, giving me a violent shake up, "how much longer are you going to lie in your bunk; do you know it's three bells? The old man left word you weren't to be called before coffee-

time," he explained ; " so now emerge forth before I drag you out by the hair.—Go and fetch the coffee," said he, as soon as I had turned out. " I'll bring a couple of biscuits, and we can sit on the spars and drink it comfortably."

What a delicious morning it was ! The sun was just rising amidst a maze of golden splendour, and overhead a few daintily crimsoned clouds were lazily floating in the pure, limpid sky. There was scarcely a breath of wind, and the sails flapped heavily as the ship rolled in unison with the scarcely perceptible swell—now clinging tightly against the masts with a sound like a long-drawn sigh, again flying out to their extreme limits, with a tumultuous accompaniment of rattling, creaking, and groaning from the blocks and spars aloft.

By-and-by even the light air, which had hitherto been coquetting with the upper sails, left us, and we were fairly becalmed on the gently swelling bosom of the ocean. The water, unruffled by even the faintest breath of air, was an intense blue, and so clear and transparent that I watched an empty tin which, having been thrown overboard, slowly sank in the azure depths, until it dwindled to a mere speck far under the ship's bottom.

" Turn to ! " shouted Mr. Harvey, as four bells struck.

Presently, while I was busily cleaning the brass-work on the poop and the rest of the watch were washing decks, our two passengers came up, talking and laughing, and skylarking about.

Jack Gudgeon was at the wheel, and Billy Looney

asked him if he thought there were any fish about "for," said he, "I've got a vevvy good fishing-wod, and pwaps I might catch something for bweakfast."

And Jack told him he would be sure to catch more than enough for breakfast, and added that the rest might be salted down.

So Billy brought out his "wod" and screwed it together, and baited his two little hooks with tiny pieces of pork ; and when his preparations were complete he sat on a campstool, anxiously watching his gaily painted float as it bobbed about in the water, with the hooks about two feet below it.

"Felt any bites, sir?" said Jack, winking at me.

"Well, no, I'm sowwy to say, but pwaps my hooks aren't deep enough. I wemember when I went fishing in a boat at Southend that our lines were let out wight to the bottom."

"The water's rather deeper here, sir. Besides, I'm afeard you're a bit too early for the fish ; they don't get up much before eight o'clock in these parts. I suppose the hot weather makes them lazy."

This was "vevvy pwobable indeed," and then Billy pulled out the hooks to see if the baits were all right ; and the other passenger, Doctor Forbes, suggested all sorts of outrageous substitutes for the bits of pork, much to the amusement of everybody but Billy Looney, who couldn't in the least see anything to laugh about.

And presently I, happening to look over the stern, saw a pretty little blue-and-white striped fish, which I pointed out to Jack Gudgeon, who then said : "Don't

you fall overboard, Tommy, boy; you'd make a fine feed for somebody as isn't far off."

"There he is!" he exclaimed, after looking about all round the ship, indicating a direction over the port quarter, and there I saw a three-cornered black thing slowly gliding along the water about fifty yards off.

"That's Jack Shark, and your little blue-and-white fish is his pilot."

Sure enough a few minutes later there was an enormous shark, "hove to," as Jack Gudgeon called it, right under our counter, with the little fish alongside him, and then the pair cruised slowly round and round the ship.

When the decks were finished Mr. Harvey got out the large hook, which he baited with a four-pound piece of pork, and lowered over the stern. Presently the shark came along, and his little pilot fish swam up and smelt the pork, or appeared to, and then went back to his master. I suppose his report was satisfactory, for the next minute the monster came slowly up, and when he got within a yard or so of the bait he turned on his back, opened such a mouth! into which the pork floated, and there was a loud snap as his teeth shut, followed by a tremendous floundering and struggling, for Mr. Shark was hooked!

Then the watch came running aft, and pretty soon hauled him alongside by the break of the poop, and Mr. Harvey made a running bowline with the end of a good stout rope, which he slipped down the line to which the hook was fastened, and at last managed to jam round

his body and one of his great fins. This rope was then put in a snatch-block, which was hooked to a strop in the main-rigging; and after the shark had had his head hauled out of the water a few minutes, "to drown him," as Jack Barrett said, we all clapped on to the rope—taking good care to be well out of reach—and landed him smack on the deck, where he lay lashing out with his great tail until the old cook persuaded him to be quiet by chopping it right off with his axe, and then, so that there should be no mistake, his head was removed in a similar manner.

When he was quite dead Rocky cut out his backbone and jaws, and the rest was thrown overboard—all but the tail, which the carpenter nailed to the flying-jib-boom-end in triumph.





CHAPTER V.

THE DOLDRUMS.

LIGHT WINDS AND VARIABLE—I LEAVE THE WHEEL FOR WOE—JACK
GUDGEON'S BED—PAYING THE DOCTOR—NEPTUNE.

THERE is plenty of pulling and hauling now to make up for our easy times in the north-east trades. The sails are kept trimmed to every breath of wind, and as it seldom hangs steady for an hour, and very often changes every few minutes, we are pretty constantly at work.

Take this afternoon, for instance. When we came on deck at twelve o'clock there was the faintest of light airs on the starboard quarter, to which the sails had just been trimmed. The sky overhead was perfectly cloudless, but far away on the port-beam a thunder-storm was raging. I could distinctly see the flashes of lightning, but the distance was too great for the sound of the thunder to be heard.

Right ahead a school of whales were ploughing steadily along in a southerly direction, and far off on

the western horizon was the white sail of a ship, the first we had seen for a fortnight.

One of the watch was in the foretop, seizing off the lanyards of the topmast-rigging, which had just been set up. Another was on the topgallant forecastle, fitting a new strop to the jib-downhaul-block. Rocky was assisting the carpenter, who was leisurely sawing a plank in two. Barrett was at the wheel, over which a temporary sun awning had been rigged; and Jack Gudgeon, for whom I was passing the ball, was serving over a pair of jib-pennants.

"Mortal hot, ain't it, Tommy?" remarked that worthy, discharging a mouthful of tobacco-juice down a convenient scupper-hole, and wiping his mouth with the back of his great hand. "Still, it ain't so bad as bein' in the north-east corner of h—l, with a sou'-west gale a-blowing the ashes in your face—is it?" After making this extraordinary proposition he, having served right up to the splice, opened out the riding turns, under which I passed the ball of spunyarn, and then he hove them taut, hauled through the bight, cut off the end, and after the orthodox tap here and there with the serving mallet he surveyed his work in a critical manner.

"There, that's near enough for a collier," said Jack, apparently satisfied with his examination. "Now go and ask the mate if I shall shackle them on."

"No, not just yet," replied Mr. Harvey to my question. "The wind will be out here directly," he continued, wetting his forefinger and holding it up above his head.

“Starboard main-brace!” and sure enough there was a perceptible breath of air on the port-beam, to meet which the yards were braced round, staysail and jib-sheets shifted over, &c.

While we were hauling aft the fore-sheet the sails began to lift and flutter, showing that the wind was drawing farther ahead.

“Belay fore-sheet; lee fore-brace.” And then the little breeze hung steady for a few minutes and freshened up a bit; but by the time every sail was set to a nicety there was another ominous shivering and flapping aloft, and I could see the man at the wheel putting his helm hard up to keep the ship from being taken aback.

By-and-by the mate, who was stumping up and down the poop, looking as though he had the toothache, decided to tack ship with the watch, for she had broken off half a dozen points or more, and the wind appeared bent upon an afternoon promenade round the compass.

“Watch, ’bout ship!” “Call the idlers!” (The idlers are men who work all day and sleep all night—in our case the boatswain, carpenter, cook, and steward.)

“Ready about!” “All ready for’ard, sir!” “Lee ho!” “Tacks and sheets!” “Mainsail—haul!” And round came our great mainyard almost as fast as we could gather in the slack of the braces.

Although the wind was light, the *Albatross* came round like a top; but just as we had manned the head-braces ready for the next order—“Fore bowline, let go and haul!”—which, indeed, Mr. Harvey was just on the point of giving, the wind suddenly and capriciously

dropped altogether. There wasn't the faintest suspicion of a breath of air in any direction.

"Belay everything. Get on with your work," quoth the mate, in quite an aggrieved tone.

That night the wind held steady at about north-west for several hours, and as it seemed likely to stand, we rigged out the boom and set our fore-topmast and lower stunsails. When this was done and the ropes coiled up, the mate called me over to the weather side of the poop—as he always does when he is in a good humour and there is no work to be done—and we walked up and down chatting away for a long time.

It was a lovely, tranquil night, and the moon was shining brilliantly. In her clear, soft light the towering fabric of masts and yards and sails looked strangely beautiful and unreal, while every rope stood clearly and sharply out against the background of glittering canvas.

After awhile I asked and obtained permission to steer, very much to the delight of the man whose wheel it was, and who was thereby enabled to go for'ard and have a nap if he liked. So he gave me the course, and I stood up on my tub as usual, and for nearly an hour the ship went along as straight as an arrow; and Mr. Harvey, after he had looked at the compass for about the twentieth time, said he was quite proud of his pupil—which made me colour up with pleasure.

A few minutes afterwards the captain came on deck, and I was so anxious that he should come and look at the binnacle to see how true the ship was going. He didn't, though, but, much to my disgust, stood by the

mizen-rigging yarning with the mate for ever so long; and I got so nervous and flurried that the ship got unsteady, and presently, when he and Mr. Harvey came aft, and the captain took a look at the compass, she was nearly a point to windward of her course.

I almost cried with vexation, and stammered out, "Sir, she hasn't been the least bit off her course until now for nearly an hour."

The captain looked at me and laughed. "I know that very well," said he. "There is a tell-tale compass in my cabin, and I dare say the ship would have been on her course now if I hadn't come on deck, you silly little boy!" and with that he walked away and went below.

By-and-by Mr. Harvey came and struck four bells. It was Gudgeon's next wheel, but I begged to be allowed to continue steering; and so when in due course Jack came aft, the mate told him he could go for'ard again.

"That's a heavy squall working up there astern," said Mr. Harvey to me about half an hour after. "However, it's coming the right way, and that's a comfort." I turned round as he spoke, and saw a huge black cloud on our weather quarter, like a blot on the fair face of the heavens, and as I looked I heard the dull muttering of distant thunder. Nearer and nearer came the squall, obscuring the stars and even the moon itself, and presently Mr. Harvey went for'ard, and I could see that the stunsails were being taken in, and afterwards the main skysail was clewed up and stowed and the upper staysails hauled down.

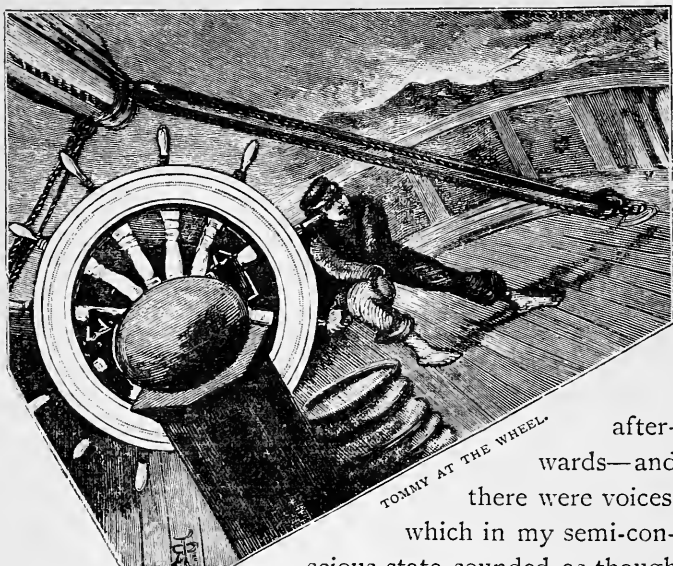
The mate then reappeared on the poop, but by this

time the cloud was hurrying along right overhead ; a sudden chill seemed to sweep through the air, and then there came a flash of lightning, followed immediately by a crashing roll of thunder, and then another flash, which seemed so close that its reflection in the binnacle quite blinded me for an instant, while the volleying, rattling roar of the thunder appeared to be immediately overhead among the spars.

Amidst all the din of the thunder, I heard Mr. Harvey's voice singing out for the royals to be clewed up, and then the wind swept upon us with an angry roar, and a perfect torrent of rain drove down in sheets, raising quite a mist upon the decks, such was its violence ; while high above all the roaring and tumult I heard the mate yelling for the topgallant halliards to be let go—and I suppose he quite forgot who was at the wheel, for the ship was tearing madly through the water. I had to get off the tub, and it was as much as ever I could do to set my teeth and heave the wheel up, and keep it from taking charge—it jerked so violently ; but I clung to it, and jammed my shoulder under one of the spokes, and although I couldn't see the compass, I knew very well that the wind had to be kept on the quarter, and by that I steered as best I could, until presently the mate and Gudgeon too came running aft.

Just then the wheel gave a tremendous kick, which sent me flying—and I don't remember any more, for I fainted. Idiotic thing to do, wasn't it ?

When I came to, I was lying dry and comfortable in a bunk—one of the spare ones in the cabin, as I found



after-
wards—and
there were voices,
which in my semi-con-
scious state sounded as though

they were quite a long way off.

Then the blanket was drawn down, and something very cool and pleasant was laid on my right shoulder, which felt very numb and dead, and I heard the doctor passenger's voice say : " Poor little fellow, his shoulder is badly bruised ; how did it happen ? "

And then the mate's voice replied : " I shall never forgive myself ; he begged to be allowed to steer, and when that squall struck us I quite forgot, in the hurry and excitement of the moment, that he was at the wheel ; and he stuck there through the thunder and lightning and torrents of rain, though all of us were nearly blinded and deafened. I should think

the ship was going thirteen knots through the water! When the first burst was over I suddenly remembered the boy, and rushed aft to him; he was clinging to the wheel with his shoulder under one of the spokes, and that's how it got bruised."

"What would have happened had he let go?" asked the doctor, covering my arm again with the blanket, and stroking my hair.

"Well," answered Mr. Harvey, "in all probability the ship would have broached to, and have had the sticks whipped out of her in no time. But," continued he, "though he isn't tall enough to see the compass card, he kept the ship on her course the whole time." And then he went on talking in a way that made me feel quite ashamed to listen any longer, so I opened my eyes and begged them not to make such a fuss over a trifle. But the doctor held up his finger and told me not to talk, but to go to sleep, which order I promptly obeyed.

When I woke again the pain in my shoulder was almost gone, though my arm felt weak and stiff; so I lay in the bunk feeling very jolly and comfortable, and quite prepared to bruise the other shoulder on the same terms at a moment's notice.

Presently the doctor came in.

"Well," said he, "how's the arm this morning? Oh! it's all right, but you're rather hungry, eh? That's a good sign. Get up, then, for I hear the steward rattling the cups and saucers, and the captain desires you to breakfast with us in the cabin."

The prospect of a civilized meal fetched me out of the bunk in no time. "Am I really? How kind of him!" I exclaimed, with great enthusiasm—for there was such a *lovely* smell of fried eggs and bacon! "But I can't come like this," said I, glancing ruefully at my attire.

"Well, no, I suppose not!" laughed the doctor. "Your costume is perhaps a little remarkable," he further observed, turning me round for inspection. "You appear to have on a pair of Mr. Harvey's woollen drawers, one of the legs of which would certainly make you a complete suit! And a flannel shirt, also the mate's property, which would have fitted you better if he had put you into one of the sleeves. I'll tell the steward to fetch some of your own clothes," he continued, calling that worthy, who very soon brought me a decent rig of blue serge, and a white shirt and collar, in which I arrayed myself.

And then the doctor hung my arm in a sling made of a black silk handkerchief, and said I looked very interesting.

So we sat down to breakfast—the captain, the mate, the two passengers, and I; and Mr. Harvey made me sit beside him, because, as he laughingly said, I was his right-hand man.

There were eggs and bacon, curried fowl (one the less, thank goodness, thought I—that beastly longboat, you know), fried potatoes, cold tongue, rabbit-pie, and delicious coffee.

I made such a meal—though I should have liked it all

the better if Edwards and Featherstone and Baby had been with us. I knew very well what they had for breakfast. A very small piece of cold salt-pork and some cold pea-soup left from yesterday's dinner, a biscuit or two, and a hook-pot of tea apiece—the latter as much like boiled rope-yarns, as anything else.

After breakfast the captain took me into his cabin, and showed me the three chronometers and explained their uses. He also taught me how to read the time from each at once, and when I was quite proficient he took his sextant and went on deck to get sights, while I stood watching the chronometers ; and every time he stamped on the deck overhead I took an instantaneous note, with a pencil and a piece of paper, of the time shown by each—hours, minutes, and seconds.

Afterwards the doctor came and ordered me on deck to get some fresh air, and, somehow, when I got on the poop I felt quite giddy, and had to sit down for a minute or so.

Jack Gudgeon was on the fore-castle hanging some shirts up to dry, and when he saw me he waved his hand, and so did two or three more of our watch who were up there smoking their pipes, and of course I returned the compliment. And presently Baby came up on some pretence or the other, and stayed as long as he dared.

Now, seeing Jack Gudgeon, reminded me of his great-coat, which was his bed, blanket, monkey-jacket, oilskins, and what not besides, and I thought how very uncomfortable he must be, poor man, and so thinking, I went

down to the pantry and asked the steward if he had a spare bed and blanket to sell ; which—having expected another passenger—he fortunately had. So it ended in my purchasing those articles, with a pillow thrown in, for twenty-five shillings, and he rolled them up and put the bundle behind the pantry door, where I could fetch it by-and-by.

And I walked about all day doing nothing, and quite enjoyed it.

When it got dusk I took the bundle for'ard. Fortunately there was nobody in the forecabin, so I spread the bed out in Gudgeon's bunk, and put the pillow and blanket in their places ; and then, having left a piece of paper, on which I had written "With Tommy's love," on the pillow, I hastened away, thinking how surprised Jack would be when he went to turn in.

Then I went into our berth, and Edwards bathed my arm with some lotion the doctor had sent. The bruise was very much inflamed and painful, and when eight bells struck I was glad enough to turn in, feeling very tired and languid.

I had such a horrible dream. I dreamt that the *Albatross* was sinking, and I fancied I was a pump, with the cling-clang, cling-clang, going on inside my head, until I woke in a state of high fever, and then the kind, grave face of the doctor appeared, and I became unconscious.

So they took me back to the spare berth in the cabin, and there I lay for twelve hours or so, perfectly delirious the whole time. What a nuisance I must have been so

everybody ! However, I dropped into a refreshing sleep then, and woke up with the fever gone.

The doctor told me this when I was able to sit up and talk a little. He yarned away, too, about all sorts of things, and of how the men had moved about so quietly when there was anything to do on the poop overhead, laying the ropes down gently so as not to make the least noise.

“And,” said he, “I became a personage of great importance in their eyes. That great black-bearded man, Gudgeon, came up to me this afternoon, and—saying as how he hoped no offence, as none was meant—put a piece of paper in my hand, and walked off. I’ll read it to you if you like ; here it is—

“‘We, the men in the port watch of this ship the *Albatross*, bound from London to Hong Kong, thanks you very kindly for doctoring our boy ; and not knowing much in this here line—which Thomas Hearne, A.B., says as how it’s usual, and being a family man oughter know—this is to say as how we wishes the captain to pay you, sir, five pounds out of our wages, which, hoping there is no offence, is as follows, your humbel servants,

“‘ *Signed*—JOHN BARRETT, A.B.
 JOHN GUDGEON, ,,
 THOMAS HEARNE, ,,
 THOMAS WALTON, ,,
 JOHN ROSS, ,, ’ ’ ”

I soon got stronger, and the next day I was able to be taken out on the poop ; and there I sat in a large cane chair, watching the rippling waves dancing merrily in the hot afternoon sunshine.

Then Mr. Harvey came and told me that we were just about crossing the line, and that Neptune would come aboard presently.

There was a canvas screen rigged up from the foremast to the rigging, and sure enough a few minutes afterwards I heard a shout of "Barque ahoy!"

Some palaver ensued, and then the screen was dropped, and a procession came along the main-deck. There were Neptune and his wife, and his barber, and the tritons, and all the rest of it, with wigs made of oakum, and ingenious costumes contrived out of odds and ends as sailors only know how.

Neptune held his court on the main-hatch, seated on an empty beef-cask, with his wife alongside him on another one, and the others were grouped around.

So the captain went and shook hands with their majesties, and produced a list of the novices, which was given to the barber, who then proceeded to call out the names.

It happened that the first to be summoned was Billy Looney, so he went up to Neptune and was introduced with great solemnity.

"I am vewy pwoud," said he, "to be pwesented to so mighty a potentate as your Woyal Highness, and twust you will accept my humble offewing of a bottle of gwog."

So he was made free of the ocean, and had a bucket of water thrown over him.

Then Baby was called, and when he went up on the hatch, Neptune's wife picked him up and set him on her

lap, and they slung a bucket of water over the pair of them.

Then it was my turn, and Edwards carried me down off the poop, and Neptune and all the rest quite forgot their parts, and came crowding round to shake hands in the gentlest possible way, until the doctor came and said his patient was not to be excited, and so Neptune himself sprinkled a few drops of salt water on my face, and proclaimed me one of his subjects.





CHAPTER VI.

JACK GUDGEON'S YARN.

THE SAILORS' POOP—A BRAZILIAN CORVETTE—A FULL-BLOWN LIEUTENANT—HANDS FALL IN!—THE CAPTAIN'S SPEECH—RIO—THE FORTS AND THE BATTLE—VICTORY—LOSS OF THE BRIG—RESCUE.

HOW I enjoy the pleasant evenings when, after work is done with for the day and the decks are cleared up, we all muster on the top-gallant forecastle, or the sailors' poop, as it is jocularly called. Sometimes there is music and singing, though often enough the men simply lounge about and spin yarns. I think I like listening to their wonderful stories best of all.

One beautiful evening, a day or two ago, we were as usual clustered round the capstan, enjoying the cool, soft evening breeze, so refreshing after the sultry heat of the day; and during a pause in the conversation, Jack Gudgeon, who was lying full length on the deck with his head upon the cat-tail, suddenly exclaimed: "Did I ever tell you how I got to be a lieutenant in the Brazilian Navy?"

"I never heard tell of it," replied one man.

"Nor yet me," said another.

"Spit it out, old 'un—let's have the yarn."

"Heave round, Corporal," came from others of the audience.

"Well, do you see," replied Jack, shifting his body into a more convenient position, "about ten years ago I made a voyage in a Yankee ship called the *John P. Clarke*, from New York to 'Frisco and back—what they calls a coasting trip. She was a hot packet, too, though I got on very well in her, and was treated well likewise, seeing as I knowed my work and wouldn't be put upon ; but some of the mob, as was barbers' clerks and the like of that, had to smell h—I, I can tell you ! Well, we got back to New York all right, arter a winter passage round the Horn, as makes me shiver now to think on. Three weeks we was bustlin' about there, nothing but easterly gales one after another, with three or four coming along lashed together at times, and everything smothered in ice. Well, as I was saying, we got back to New York at last, and when the ship was towing in through the entrance to Long Island Sound, the old man sends for me aft, and when I got there he says, 'Gudgeon,' he says, 'I guess we're going to China our next voyage, and if you like to stay by the ship I'll give you the second mate's billet, and fifty dollars a month.' 'I'm your man, Capt'n Stevens,' says I (that was his name ; Bully Stevens we all called him), 'and thank you for the offer.' So when the rest went ashore, I left my chest aboard.

“ Well, we was paid off, and of course I went for a cruise round and spent all the money as usual. When it was gone I went down to the ship, and found she was on the loading berth, and getting deep down in the water too, with a whole gang of men and horses and steam-engines sticking the cargo into her. The capt’n was on the poop, so I went aboard, and he shook hands with me, and says, says he, ‘ Good-morning, Mister Gudgeon,’ and interdoosed me to one of the owners as was there as his new second mate. So by-and-by I calls the old man aside, and tells him I wanted a few dollars to buy some respectable clothes suitable for my new position ; and he gave me an order on the office for thirty dollars, made out to Mister John Gudgeon, second mate of the ship *John P. Clarke*, and when I got it I went ashore again.

“ As I was walking up the wharf, a tall gentleman—I could see he was a seaman—came up and asked me if I was looking for a ship. So I said, ‘ Well, no, I ain’t ; that’s my ship lying there.’

“ All he said to that was, ‘ Oh, very well ; no offence, I hope,’ and with that he turned round and walked up the wharf with me, and we got into conversation about one thing and another. Very pleasant he was, too, laughing and chatting, though I could see he was a long ways above my cut ; and I thinks to myself, I’m very much mistaken if you ain’t been on the quarter-deck of a ship flying the white ensign, some time or ’nother. I knowed, do you see, having been in the Navy myself. However, I said nothing at the time, though I

wished afterwards I'd spoke my mind. Anyways, when we got up in the street he asked me to come and take a drink with him, and in course I was agreeable, and so we walks into a liquor saloon, him first and me arter him, through the front part until we come to a little inside room, and there we sets down as comfortable as could be, and drinks best part of a bottle of whisky between us.

"At last he says, 'Let's have a drop of cure-your-sore,'—or some such name—'to top up with.' So the landlord fetched two little glasses of the stuff, whatever it was. I dranked mine, and that's all I remember."

"You was drugged, then?" said Rocky.

"Sartin sure," remarked Jack.

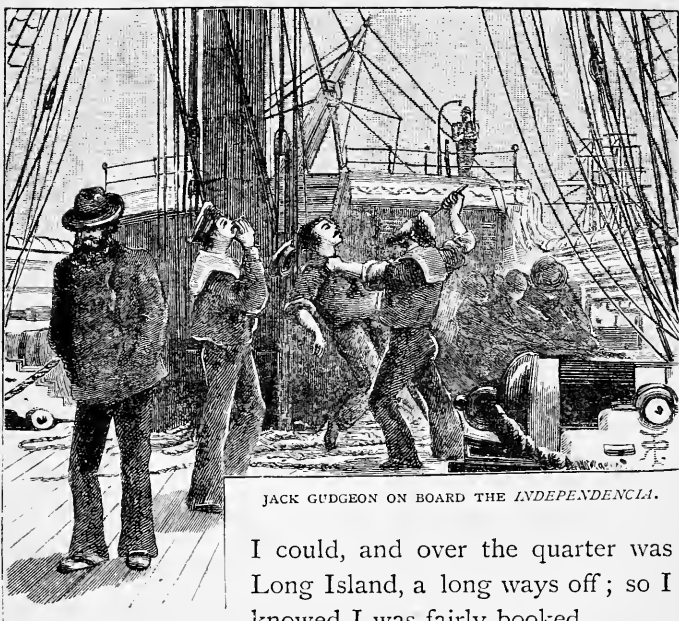
"Well, when I came to, I was lying in a hammock, feeling terrible bad sure 'nough. There was lots of others hanging up all round me, and I knowed by the way they swung that I was aboard a ship, and at sea too.

"I went up on deck when I felt well enough to turn out, so as to find out what the caper was, and I seed I was aboard a man-o'-war of some sort. They was just boarding the main-tack when I came up the ladder, the horriblemob I ever did clap eyes on, and the decks was in a hawful state. Pigs and sheep tied up between the guns, heaps of vegetables, beef casks, gear and garbage of all descriptions scattered about everywhere. Two drunken men was quarrelling just abreast of the foremast, and when I passed, one of them hauled out a knife, and, before you could say Jack Robinson, he

drove it into the other's breast right up to the hilt—through his heart, I suppose, for he let out a yell and fell back dead's a hammer.

"Thinks I, this here's a nice sort of packet, else I'm d—d!

"However, aft I went, picking my way along as best



JACK GUDGEON ON BOARD THE *INDEPENDENCIA*.

I could, and over the quarter was Long Island, a long ways off; so I knowed I was fairly booked.

"On the poop, with two or three others, I seed my precious friend—him as got me drugged; but this time he was dressed in a blue mainsail-cut coat, with no roping round the foot, and brass buttons and epaulettes and all the rest of it. He's the skipper of this ballahoo, thinks I, for certain.

“There was a sentry—a sojer—standing at the break of the poop, with a gun, and his bayonet fixed on the end. He tried to stop me from going further aft, and stood there jabbering something, and at last I got wild. ‘Out of the road,’ I says, ‘you herrin’-guttet guffey!’ and with that I got hold of his gun and hove it in the scuppers, and then I fisted him and slung him down on the main-deck, where he laid all of a heap singing out for Santa somebody.

“Right aft I goes to where the officers was standing, and they was all laughing to see my little difference with the sentry.

“But I was in a towering rage, though, and no mistake, and just as I begun speak out my mind the captain stopped me.

“‘You can’t mend matters by making a row,’ said he; ‘better take things quietly. You are at sea now in the Brazilian corvette *Independencia*, and all the talking in the world won’t alter that fact.’

“‘But,’ says I, ‘I’m an Englishman, and second mate of that ship where you met me yesterday, or whenever it was, and here’s my proof’—showing him the order for thirty dollars what Cap’n Stevens gave me.

“‘Oh,’ says he, ‘I’ve made a better haul than I expected; you’re just the man I want. Come down below and have a glass of wine; then we can talk matters over.’

“‘No more cure-your-sore,’ says I.

“‘No, no!’ says he, laughing; ‘we’ve done with that now!’

“When we got down into his cabin—a lovely place it was too, all gold and filigree work—he began to tell me about the ship, and the Brazilians, and the like of that, and presently he let out he’d been a lewtenant in the Royal Navy. But I stopped him there, and says I, ‘I guessed as much ; I was captain of the foretop in the *Excellent* on the China station for two years myself, and knows the looks of a Navy officer.’

“‘Better and better,’ says he ; ‘without further palaver you can be fust lewtenant of this ship, and a hundred and fifty dollars a month—only say the word.’

“‘That will do me,’ says I, ‘and there’s my hand upon it.’ So we shook hands and drunk to our good healths.

“Then he fetched out a sheet of parchment with stamps and seals all over it, and filled in my name, and I signed ‘John Gudgeon’ at the bottom. So there I was, a regular full-blown lewtenant.

“‘Now,’ says the captain (Barclay was his name—James Forrester Barclay), ‘let’s see, first of all, what sort of a fit out I can give you.’

“Off he went rummaging, and in ten minutes time I was rigged out in a full suit of uniform, sword and all complete ; and when I’d got everything ship-shape and Bristol fashion we went up on deck again, and the captain interdoosed me to the other officers—quite youngsters they was, and spoke very fair English for foreigners—and we got regular friendly in no time.

“One of them gave me a cigar, and there I was

smoking away on the weather side of the poop, and as happy as the little boy that killed his schoolmaster.

"Life's a rum thing, ain't it?"

"By-and-by we went to dinner; such a spread—I never see the like before.

"There was the steward flying about with this, that, and t'other, filling your glass when it got empty, taking away your plate and continual bringing fresh grub, a different sort each time.

"This here beats the *John P. Clarke* into a cocked-hat, thinks I.

"Then when 'twas all over there was coffee and cigars brought round, and we set smoking and yarning for half an hour or so; and then the captain let the others know that he wanted a quiet talk with me, so they went to finish their cigars on deck.

"‘Now, Mr. Gudgeon,’ says he, when we were alone, ‘there’s nobody but our two selves to lick the ship’s company into shape and carry out some sort of discipline and routine. I’ve been picking up men from all the ports along the coast; and, now that I’ve got my full complement, we’d better commence at once and see what we can do with them.’

"And so, after he had told me all he knew himself about matters connected with the ship, we both went on deck.

"It was then well on towards two bells in the second dog-watch, and the ship was standing out from the land under easy canvas, with her sails set anyhow, and the decks in just the same state as when I first saw them.

“‘I’m going to make a start now, sir,’ says I to the captain.

“‘All right,’ he replied. ‘Go ahead!’

“So I sent for the boatswain. He was a great buck nigger, and he grinned all over his face when I told him to pipe ‘Hands, fall in.’

“However, off he went, and he and his two mates were soon drumming up the men, and in about five minutes they were all mustered in two pretty equal divisions, one on each side of the main-deck.

“So then the captain and me goes and has a look at them.

“You never seed such a lot; a few was seamen, but most of them looked like farm labourers, loafers, and trash of all descriptions and all nations.

“With the assistance of the darkey boatswain I got all the seamen picked out from the rest, and then I made the likeliest of them petty officers, and gave them their stations. When that was done we divided the watches into subdivisions and sections, with a petty officer in charge of each, and pretty soon everybody in the ship knew where he belonged to, which was a good beginning, anyway.

“And then I started them clearing up the decks, stowing everything away in its proper place, griping in the boats, and securing the guns for sea. Why, in about an hour she looked like another ship, with everything tidy and nice.

“Then I turned to and set all the sails properly, roused out the sheets, and dragged everything as taut .

as hands could make it, trimmed the yards nice and true, and had the ropes all coiled down on deck clear for running.

“‘Bravo, Gudgeon!’ said the captain, when this was all done, rubbing his hands and laughing. ‘Now pipe, “Hands, lay aft,”’ he continued, turning to the boatswain.

“‘Men,’ says he, when the crew had shuffled aft by the break of the poop, ‘I want to say a few words to you. I am very pleased to see that you appear willing to work; see that you continue so. Obey orders and do your best; that is all I require. The petty officers will instruct those under them as far as lies in their power, and I hope we shall soon have a smart ship’s company. I demand implicit obedience to the officers; and now if there is anybody present who doesn’t intend to conform to what I have said, let him jump overboard. It will save him and me much trouble, for I will have order and discipline. You understand me! Pipe down!’

“This little speech seemed to please the crew, for one of my English petty officers jumped on a gun-carriage and called for three cheers for the captain, which were given, though in rather a queer way. You see they hadn’t learnt to cheer like Englishmen. However, they all seemed in one mind—as I, for one, was glad to see.

“It was eight o’clock then, so the port watch went below, and I turned in, leaving the captain in charge of the ship.

“The next day we commenced a regular routine. Six o’clock, watch on deck coil up ropes and give her a thorough wash down fore and aft, and clean wood and

brass-work. After breakfast, watch below clean lower deck ; watch on deck, sail drill. At three bells, hands to quarters, clean guns ; then gun drill for half an hour. (We carried six sixty-four pounders, three a side ; and three carronades, one on the forecastle head and two on the poop.) Then the watch on deck went to seamanship instruction, each section under its own petty officer, and the others went below. At eight bells, dinner ; and after that hands to sail drill for half an hour or so. Then watch to seamanship and general work aloft, and at four o'clock hands to quarters again for an hour's gun drill. At two bells, inboard for sea, secure, and clear the decks up. A very easy routine, but quite enough to begin with.

"I had a pretty fair ship's company by the time we had been at sea a month. To be sure, several was flogged and one or two shot. The first I had shot was the man that stabbed the other that afternoon, but the rest soon sobered down when they saw what they had to expect.

"One day I says to the captain, 'Is our folks at war with anybody? Because,' says I, 'the men are able to work the ship pretty smart now, and they make uncommon good practice with the guns; I should like to see how they would get on in regular action.'

"'So should I,' said he; 'and now we're fit to be looked at we'll go into Rio, and see what's going on. If there isn't a war, they'll d—d soon make one on purpose for us.'

"Well, about a week after this we arrived at Rio, and

had a proper reception, I can tell you ; we blazing away powder saluting the port, and they doing likewise to us from the batteries.

“ When the ship was properly moored, everything all ataunto, and the yards squared by the lifts and braces, the captain went ashore in his galley to call on the governor ; and after an hour or so he came back, and brought the governor with him to dine aboard the ship, and we had high old times. Before he went ashore he gave the captain orders to get under way the next morning, and proceed to some place down along the coast to bust up two forts that was there, belonging to some other nation. I dunno who they was, I’m sure ; however, that was the orders. So when it came daylight we hove up our anchors and left.

“ It took us pretty near a fortnight to get down to where the forts was, what with head-winds and calms, for the *Independencia* wasn’t a steamer. There weren’t many steamboats about excepting European ones in those days.

“ Well, we made the land one morning, and there was the forts we wanted, and a little brig as well, which was lying at anchor a bit higher up the bay. There was a nice fresh breeze right on the land, so in we went under our three topsails and jib, and the forts and the brig as well began blazing away at us long before we got within range.

“ We took no notice of their firing, but went to quarters, loaded the guns and ran them out, and stood steadily on until we got within about seven hundred

yards of the brig and perhaps a thousand yards of the shore. Then we rounded to, and as soon as our star-board broadside bore on the brig we gave her a dose that knocked all the fight out of *her*, for they slipped at once and run her ashore; and as soon as she took the ground her crew bolted overboard into the water like so many rats, and swam ashore and scampered off up the beach, never stopping until they got behind the walls of the nearest of the forts.

“Then the enemy’s firing, which had ceased for a minute or so, burst out again until we could see and hear nothing but the glancing flashes of red flame, the rolling, eddying clouds of smoke, the thunder of the guns, and the sharp crackling of the sojers’ muskets.

“We wasn’t idle neither, and, with the way the wind was, we were able to sail along, engaging one fort until the guns wouldn’t bear; then training them on the bow and pounding into the other for as long as possible, and, when that one was out of reach, ‘Cease firing,’ ‘Bout ship,’ and back again, carrying on the same performance.

“And so, now pouring our shot into one fort, then into the other, we sailed backwards and forwards, to and fro, for over two hours. Our loss in killed and wounded was pretty heavy, though nothing like so much as it would have been if we’d laid at anchor; for being a moving target, do you see, we was harder to hit. Any way, we had a couple of dozen hands or so *horse-de-comeback*, and besides that the rigging was cut about a good deal.

“Once, after we’d been in action about an hour, a round shot cut the tye of our main-topsail halliards, and down came the yard, lumpus, on the cap, carrying away the lifts and springing the yard in the slings. There was a job for you! We set the fore and mizen-topgallant sails, so as to keep the ship moving, and then half a dozen of us jumped aloft to knot the lifts, splice the tye, and fish the yard with stunsail booms, just temporary like.

“That was worse than fighting. Every now and again, *screech* a shot would dash by, close to sometimes, and as for bullets the air seemed alive with them; they was buzzing all round like cockchafers a-flying past.

“One of the Englishmen—Bill Johnson by name—and me was passing a lashing in the starboard quarter of the yard, and I was just hollering to him—you had to holler to make one another hear above the roaring of our guns—that I thought one more turn of the lashing would do, and then we could wedge up, when all of a sudden he straightened himself up on the foot-rope with a jerk, blood frothed from his mouth, an awful look came over his face, and I saw that a bullet had hit him right fair in the chest. In another second he let go, and fell backwards off the yard into the heaving folds of smoke that was wreathing and curling round the mast beneath.

“However, we finished our job at last, bent the sail on to the yard again and mast-headed it. I stayed up aloft until the sail was set, and as I was going down the

rigging a shot came along and cut the rattlin I was just going to put my foot on.

"I wouldn't do a job like that again—ah! not for the best ten-pound note as ever came out of the Bank of England!

"Next thing, a thunder-squall came driving down towards us; the sky to wind'ard was black as night, and, though the sun was shining and the water was blue enough where we were, under the great arched thunder-cloud the sea was like ink, and flaked with white through being torn by the hurrying wind.

"Then it struck us. The thunder rolled and crashed, and the lightning streamed overhead; but, through all, the bellowing of our guns never ceased. Our three topsail halliards were let go when the first gust came howling along, and then the flouncing of the canvas aloft, the thunder, the boom of the cannon, and the wild shrieking of the wind, made a scene of tumult that I can't describe and you can't possibly imagine.

"Well, the action continued, as I said before, for more than two hours, nearer three, I dare say, and there was no doubt the forts was getting the worst of it. So at last I says to the captain, 'Let me take the cutter and the two gigs, and as many men as can be spared. I'll land over on that point and take them in the rear. If nothing else comes of it, we can rattle some bullets in amongst them.'

"'Go on, then,' says he, 'and good luck to you.'

"Well, we manned and armed the boats, and when the ship was abreast of the point off we dashed.

"It wasn't long before the grape-shot came flying round the boats, but they fired very wild and didn't hit us, for the ship was blazing away all the time, and I dare say they got a shot in amongst them now and again that disturbed their aim.

"There was lots of little sand-hills where we landed, so the first thing I does was to have a look round from the top of one of them, to see whether any men had been sent out from the forts to check us. There was nobody in sight, and I didn't stop long to look, for they had muskets as well as us, and the bullets was ping-pinging all round.

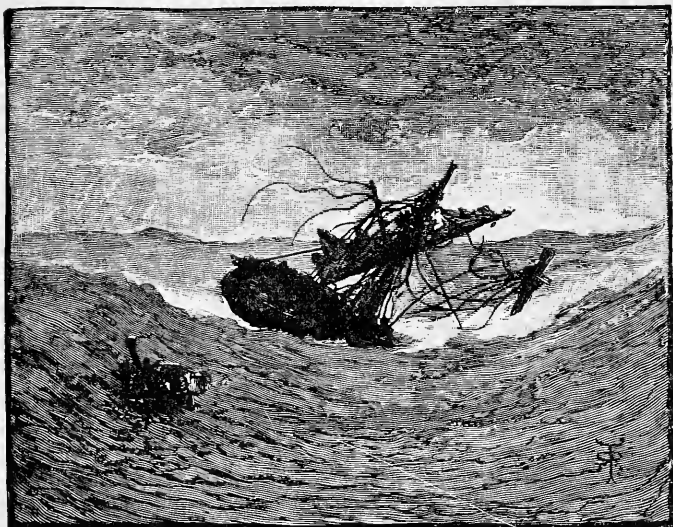
"I got my boats under cover as well as I could, and then we commenced skirmishing in amongst the sand-hills, firing away as often as we got a chance, until at last a lucky shot from the ship knocked down a whole lump of the wall of the nearest fort, on the side facing to us. So I gave orders to fire one volley in through the breach, and then I sung out, 'Heave away your guns! Out cutlasses and follow me!' Off we set—there was about fifty of us, I should think—and them as could run fastest got there first.

"We only had about three or four hundred yards to travel, and though plenty dropped on the road, we arrived at last, and charged right slap through the breach into the fort, and after a very few minutes we drove out the enemy, or what was left of them, and they fled away into the country.

"When the people in the smaller fort saw what had happened, they very wisely cleared out as well. So I

hauled down their flag, and hoisted a blue shirt in token of victory.

“Well, we stayed there the next day, dismantling the forts and getting off the brig, and when that was done we went back to Rio—leastways we started for Rio. I was in charge of the brig, with a prize crew aboard, and we never fetched Rio nor nowhere else ; for it came



LOSS OF THE BRIG.

on to blow two days afterwards, and the brig commenced to leak like a sieve as soon as she strained a bit.

“We lost sight of the *Independencia*, too, and after twenty-four hours’ continual pumping we gave it up for a bad job and took to the boats, seeing as the water was gaining on us every hour, although the wind and sea had gone down.

“Me and two other Englishmen went in the gig, and the cutter was lowered alongside for the rest, who was all foreigners, but they had started a cask of rum, and said there was plenty of time to think about leaving the ship, and there they stuck drinking. I tried to get them into the cutter, but it was no good, and as they were beginning to fight I thought it better to leave.

“We hadn’t been gone ten minutes, before my bold brig cocked her stern up into the air, and went down head first, with the cutter made fast to her. We rowed back to see if there was anybody to be picked up, but nothing was to be seen except a few bits of wreckage floating about; so after staying cruising around for a quarter of an hour or thereabouts, we stepped our mast, pulled up the sail, and left.

“We was four days in the boat, and on the morning of the fifth, when the sun rose, we seed the sail of a ship, and in an hour or so they picked us up. She turned out to be a French barque, bound to Havre, and there they took us, and treated us well too, all the passage.

“From there I shipped to New York again, in an English brig—before the mast, of course; and when we arrived out, I went up to the office where I was bound when Captain Barclay picked me up, and had a talk with the owners of the *John P. Clarke*. They’d guessed what had happened, knowing that the Brazilian was raking for hands, and Captain Stevens had very kindly sent my chest up to the office, thinking I’d be sure to turn up some day. Precious glad I was to get it back again too.

"So all I got out of the Brazilian Navy was my commission—it's in my chest now—and a cut over the arm that a sojer gave me when I was jumping into the fort."

Having thus brought his story to a conclusion, Jack got up and went off to light his pipe at the galley fire.

"Regular good yarn, that," remarked Barrett.

"That's so," replied Brooks, the old boatswain. "But if Corporal's been a lewtenant I can cap him easy, for I've been mor'n that—I've been a king in my time."

"A king!" exclaimed several of the men at once.

"Yes, a proper bono-fido king," said the boatswain. "'Tis too late to start on the yarn now, seeing as it's close on eight bells; howsumnever, I'll tell you all about it to-morrow evening, if you like."

"So do," said Rocky; and the others having also expressed their complete approval of the boatswain's offer, the subject dropped.

"Who's first look-out is it in the middle watch?" asked Tom Walton.

"Mine," replied Barrett.

"Who relieves you; Rocky, ain't it?"

"Yes," rejoined that individual, "I reckon I shall in doo course."

"Well, I'm a farmer¹ to-night, and means to have a quiet and peaceful night's rest, if so be it's possible," said Walton. "Don't forget to give us a call, though, if there's any business to be attended to."

¹ A sailor calls himself a farmer when he has neither wheel nor look-out during a night.



CHAPTER VII.

THE BOATSWAIN'S STORY.

WRECK OF THE *KAFFIR CHIEF*—HARPOONING SHARKS—LANDING AT
TAIKU-TAMBA—WAR CANOES—A DESPERATE FIGHT—BUILDING THE
MORITA—VISITING THE WRECK—H.M.S. *MARINER*—LEAVING THE
ISLAND—ACCOUNTS FOR THE ADMIRALTY.



HE next evening found us mustered as usual on the forecastle, and, true to his word, the old boatswain commenced to tell us the promised story, which I, for one, was very anxious to hear.

"A good many years ago," he began, seeing we were all attention, "I was sailing in a little topsail schooner called the *Kaffir Chief*, belonging to Sydney.

"We was trading up among the islands in the Pacific, swapping hatchets, and glass beads, and trumpery the likes of that, with the natives for *bêche-de-mer*, sandal wood, cocoa-nut oil, and anything else we could lay holt of.

"We'd been away nigh on a year, and was getting

on for being filled up, so the captain thought he'd visit a group of islands where we hadn't been before, so as to try and complete the cargo previous to making tracks for Sydney, for we'd pretty well ransacked the natives where we was.

"We saw the islands marked on the chart all right, so we gets under way, and lays a course about nor'-nor'-east, but never come to no islands, though we sailed on for days and days; and at last the skipper allowed he'd missed them somehow or 'nother, so we turned her round to go back again.

"That night it came on to blow pretty fresh, and we hauled down a pair of reefs in the mainsail, and took in our fore-topsail and top-gallant sail, likewise the foresail and gaff-topsail, and hauled down the boom-jib, so as to let her dodge along easy like under the reefed mainsail, staysail and jib; for it was terrible dark, and sort of hazy.

"I went aft to the helm at ten o'clock, and hadn't been there more'n about a quarter of an hour afore I heard the look-out yelling, 'Breakers ahead! Hard up!'

"I shoved the tiller hard-a-weather, and put it in the becket so as to keep it there, and then jumped to let go the main-sheet. But Lord! we was in the white water almost before I could cast the turns off. A comber came and lifted the vessel up like she'd been a straw, and when she came down she struck.

"I was half-way up the main-rigging before the next sea came, and had sense enough to out knife and cut

the peak and throat halliards, when, of course, down came the sail—just in time, too, for along came another sea, like a wall, and swept right over the poor little schooner.

“When it had passed, there was nothing but the mainmast left standing, and I don’t suppose that would have been there if I hadn’t cut away the halliards and let the sail run down.

“I got up into the cross-trees as quick as possible, and made myself fast there the best way I could, and had a look around. It was a sight, too, sure enough. The decks was all busted up from the main-hatch right for’ard, the bulwarks and everything else was swept clean out of her, and all I could see when the waves rolled past was the bare timber ends, and the stump of the foremast sticking up out of the white foam; so I knowed I was alone on the wreck.

“I suppose the sea that did the damage hove the schooner farther up on the reef, for the others as come along didn’t much more than break over the hull, but for all that, every sea as it thundered past made the mast quiver and tremble; I thought it was going over the side, plenty of times.

“It stood, though, and at last, after I’d been in the cross-trees about an hour, I went fast asleep.

“The sun was just rising when I woke up; there wasn’t a breath of wind, and the sea was as quiet as a mill-pond, except the least heave setting in on the reef. There was land of some sort away to the nor’ard, about twenty miles off, but nothing else was in sight but the

wreck and the jagged points of the reef rising out of the water all round.

“The ship was lying over on her port side, full of water, of course, and I could see it swirling in and out where the decks was ripped up, every time there was any motion. The wreck of the foremast laid alongside, and underneath what was the lee-rigging I saw the body of one of my poor shipmates. The lift of the sea made him appear as if he was alive and struggling to get out, and he looked so natural that I was just going to help him, when I recollected he must have been dead a good many hours ago, and past my assistance, poor chap.

“And as I looked I see the most terriblest sight. Four great sharks came tearing along, and there was a whirl of foam, with here a fin and there a great lashing tail, and I covered my face with my hands and cried like a child. When I looked again there was only a few scarlet bubbles where the body had been, and the water all round was churned up like boiling milk.

“Then I crawled down on deck in case the mast should fall—I knew well enough there would soon be an end of me if it did, for by this time the water was swarmed with sharks ; they got inside, through the bottom, I suppose, and I could feel them scurrying about, for they regular shook the ship.

“I believe I must have gone most raving mad, for I let myself down the slope of the deck by a rope, and cursed and yelled at them.

“More fool me, for they came crowding round like the ducks on a pond when you stand and heave in bits of

bread ; and I hadn't been there long before one great brute—big as a boat he was ; the enormousest shark I ever did see—made a jump for my leg, and came near enough to make me crawl back to wind'ard again, out of reach.

“ Then I went down the companion stairs and into the cabin ; it was up to my knees in water, but no sharks couldn't get in there, unless they came down the same way as I did, which warn't likely. I knowed where the harpoon was kept, and I went and got it out and bent a new manilla line on to it, and, thinks I, I'll make some on you wish you'd never come anigh this good wreck, else I'm d—d ; and with that I went on deck again and sat on the companion.

“ Presently, along came the big 'un, and when he got right underneath I ups harpoon and jams it into him, right between the shoulders, and ketches a turn with the line. He made a dart, but I snubbed him up short before he got much way on and surged to the strain. The good line held, though as it fetched him up the shark most bounced out of the water.

“ Back he came towards the wreck, and the others after him, and as true as I'm a living man, they tore him to pieces and wolfed him !

“ I hauled my harpoon in easy enough, and his great jaw-bones with it, for the barbs had gone in so firm that the other sharks couldn't tear his head away from the iron. Without a word of a lie his mouth was three feet across. I never seed the like since I've been going a-fishing. The meat was all cleaned off except just

where the barbs of the harpoon was ; all the rest was as bare as them jaw-bones that's hanged up in the Mahogany Bar.¹

"I killed nigh on a-dozen sharks that way, and there was the same performance each time ; but at last they got fly and wouldn't come near, and I got tired of the sport, so I clewed it up after a bit, and went down into the cabin again.

"The first thing I did was to rummage about to see if there was anything to eat, and in the pantry I hit upon a piece of beef and a bottle of rum ; there was plenty of biscuits too, but they were all soaked with water and spoiled ; anyway, the beef was good enough for me, so I had a good feed. After I'd finished my meal, and had a pull at the rum bottle, I went up on deck again.

"What pleased me most when I got there was that the sharks had all left, leastways—there warn't any in sight nowhere.

"Now I must tell you we had three boats in the schooner ; a little dingey that hung in davits over the stern, a long-boat that was kept in on deck, and a double-ended sort of whale-boat which pulled four oars, and that, being the handiest, was the one we in general used.

"The first two had been swept away when we struck, but I had hopes that the whaler warn't damaged ; she had been lowered down the main-hatch, do you see, when we left the last islands, so as to keep the decks clear. So I goes to have a look, and when I got as far as where the main-hatch had been I saw the boat—least-

¹ A public-house near Ratcliff Highway.

ways I couldn't see more'n half of her, the other part was covered with pieces of the deck planks that hadn't been washed away ; however, I was glad to see that what was visible didn't seem damaged.

"The next thing was to get to her ; no easy matter, for there was nothing but water between me and the boat, and I ain't much of a swimmer, to say nothing of the sharks. I knew very well that if they came back while I was away from the after part of the ship, I was a gone coon. However, there was the boat, and she had to be got out somehow or other, so I stripped off my clothes, and had a good look all round for sharks. I couldn't see none, and then I slipped into the water as quiet as I could, and paddled along until I came to one of the deck beams, and there I has a rest for a second or two, and then travelled on again. Bimeby I got to the boat all safe, and crawled into her. I was very thankful to find that she was not jammed in any way, but only kept in her place by reason of her own buoyancy, and so with my extra weight she came away clear of the wreckage, and floated with her gunwale just level with the water. So I got an oar out, and managed to shove her slowly along until her nose touched the sound deck where my clothes were, and I jumped out and made the painter fast.

"Then I went down on my bended knees and thanked God Almighty for His great mercy.

"Well, I very soon got the sails and oars out of the boat, and then baled out all the water with a big jug I found in the pantry. I was mortal anxious to get away

from the wreck as soon as possible, so I started at once to load up the boat with things I reckoned might be useful to me.

"We was well armed, you see, and I fetched half a dozen muskets and a bundle of cutlashes and a dozen pistols out of the cabin, and four little kegs of gunpowder, which was all I could find—they was stowed away in behind the rudder case, and was quite dry. I also got a bag full of bullets and a bag or two of shot, my harpoon, a spy-glass and a compass, a hammer and a saw and a few handy tools, a case of hatchets, all the grub I could find—which wasn't much—and a couple of bottles of rum besides the one I had opened.

"All these things I stowed away in the boat, and then I went back to see what else there was that might come in handy.

"I busted open the skipper's chest of drawers, and got out a dozen shirts or so, and some gear of all sorts. I also took his go-ashore suit, what he used to wear when he went to palaver with the chiefs—a regular swell affair, brass buttons and gold lace all over ; and that lot I took up and put in the boat.

"There was two brass carronades on the quarter-deck, so I put a strop round the mainmast and hooked the main reef-tackle on to it, and hoisted the little guns into the boat, carriages and all ; and then, after I'd found and stowed away as many of the shot belonging to them as I could find, I got into the boat, stepped the mast, and shoved off.

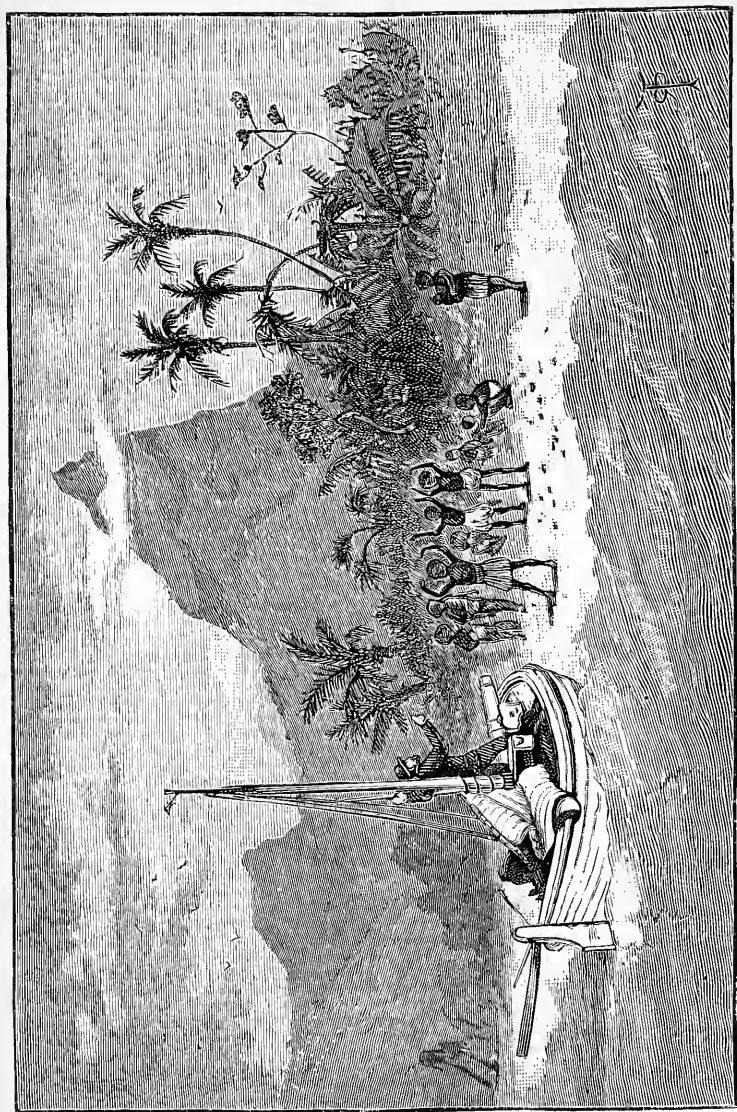
"There was a little breeze blowing right straight for

the land, so as soon as I was clear of the wreck I shipped my rudder, hoisted the sail, and stood away, before the wind, giving a wide berth to all the points of the reef as stuck up out of the water, and in about ten minutes time I was clear of it and in the open sea.

“So then I lay back in the stern-sheets as comfortable as possible, and had a smoke and a good drink of rum, and afterwards I put on the captain’s brass-bound suit, for I knowed that the natives (and civilized people, too, for the matter of that) shows great respect for fine clothes; and when I’d arrayed myself to my liking, I went and loaded one of the carronades which I had placed right for’ard with its muzzle over the nose of the boat, for, thinks I, if so be as this land ahead is inhabited, I’ll let them know it’s no common person as is coming ashore.

“In about four or five hours I was well in with the land, and on the beach I could see a whole lot of natives standing about. I looked at them through the glass, and made out they hadn’t got spears or weapons of any sort, which was satisfactory, and looked more home-like, as I might say.

“When I got within a couple of hundred yards or so of the beach, I stood up and waved my arms about over my head, and the natives retreated back from the water’s edge, and stood all grouped together a little way up the beach. Soon as I was close enough in I lowered the sail, and as the boat’s stem touched the sandy bottom I fired my bow-chaser—Bang! The little piece made a devil of a racket, and I jumped ashore in the smoke.



THE BOATSWAIN LANDING AT TAIKU-TAMBA.

“When I came to look round, the natives was all lying flat on their faces, frightened out of their wits, I suppose ; so I marched towards them, and as I came near they got up and looked like they didn’t know whether to run away or no. So I went up to the one I had put down in my mind as the head serang, and made signs of friendship, and though he and the others too seemed terrible scared at first, it wasn’t long before we got the best of friends.

“Then the chief made a long speech, and when he had finished I said : ‘I’m verry pleased to see you all looking so well and hearty, and here’s towards your good healths, ladies and gents,’ I says, taking a suck at the bottle of rum I had in my pocket.

“‘Take a drink yourself,’ I says, handing it to the chief, ‘to show there’s no ill-feeling.’ He smelt it, and had a taste, and then he took a good pull at the bottle, giving it back to me afterwards, and looking like it kind of suited him better’n being struck by lightning.

“‘It’s rare good stuff, ain’t it, old party?’ said I ; and he laughed and said, ‘Tonga-tonga.’

“Then I got them to lend me a hand to haul my boat up a bit, and after that the chief made signs to me to follow him ; so we set off up the beach, me and him in the middle and the rest crowding round, laughing and chattering like so many monkeys.

“By-and-by we came to their village—right in among the trees it was, and the chief led me into the largest hut, and the other people were gathered round the entrance. After a bit some women brought in a lot of

grub on wooden dishes. I didn't know what it was, and didn't care either, for I was very hungry, and the food smelt lovely ; so me and the chief done a good feed.

"One dish I knowed was monkey, because 'twas roasted whole ; anyhow, it was all very nice, and when we'd finished I hauls out the bottle again, and what there was left we drinked between us.

"By that time, what with the rum and the excitement, I was getting pretty merry, and without more ado I gives 'em 'Hearts of Oak.'

"Frightened them? Lord bless ye, they was delighted! and nothing would do but I must go out in front of the hut and sing it again for the benefit of all hands, and afterwards I gived 'em 'Rule Britannia.' When I'd finished singing they clapped their hands like civilized folks—just the very same.

"Then I made signs to the chief as I wanted to turn in, so we went back to the big hut, and in one corner was a lot of mats, which he pointed out to me and gave me to understand was put there for me to lie on. I turned the mats over to see there was no tri-antelopes underneath (them big spiders, you know), and then I lay down and was soon fast asleep."

Just as the boatswain had reached this point in his yarn the mate sang out for him, and when he came back on the forecastle he went on with it again.

"Let's see ; where was I?"

"Why," answered Rocky, "you was just turned in arter bustin' forth with 'Rule Britannia.'"

"Ah! so I were. Well, I slept until daylight the

next morning, and when I woke I turned out and strolled down through the wood to the beach.

“It was a charming lovely place, sure enough. I had landed in a little bay. On the east side the land ran out high and bold for about a mile, and then it stopped suddenly—like it had been chopped down with an axe—in an upright cliff. The face of the point was all cliffs too, high towards the end, but getting less and less as they got in towards the bight, until at last the rocks merged into the sandy beach, and the trees that the point was covered with met the wood where the natives had built their village.

“The point to the west’ard was long and low, and there the trees grew right out to the water’s edge. The land rose towards the back of the island, and ended in a peak, which was clear of trees and stood out quite sharply against the beautiful blue sky, and everywhere else was nothing but trees and flowers wherever you looked.

“Well, I walked down to the boat, and found she was all right; so the first thing I did was to unload her and carry the gear up to where the trees joined on to the beach, and there I made a tent with the boat’s sail and stowed everything away under it. There was lots of the natives about, and they lent me a hand in doing all this.

“They’d got over their fright by now, and we was quite sociable. I couldn’t get anybody to touch the guns, though—they gave them a wide berth; so I left the carronades in the boat for the time being.

"Presently one of the natives touched my arm and pointed to the tent. I looked up, and there was a whole tribe of monkeys busy casting off the lashings, and no doubt they'd soon have had the whole consarn adrift. So I laughed, and said to the one as showed me, 'Come along with me, my son ; I'm a-going to knock the stuffin' out of one or two of them gents.' And with that I started off for the tent, and beckoned the native to follow.

"The monkeys all cleared out when they saw us coming, and got up amongst the trees, chattering and screeching like a gals' boarding-school out on the bust.

"Well, next thing I fetched out a musket from under the tent, and loaded it so as the natives could see what was going on—there was plenty of them mustered round by now—and then I laughed and nodded so they shouldn't be scared ; and when I'd got the gun ready I pointed to one big monkey as was sitting scratching his tail-end on a branch not very far off, and without more ado I ups gun, takes a steady aim, and fired—Bang !

"Down he fell out of the tree, as dead as a hammer. I went and picked him up, and all the natives came round and looked, and the boldest one turned the monkey over and examined the hole the bullet had made, and they chattered away and looked at me with awe and admiration. So I put the gun away and hanged the monkey by the neck on to a branch of a tree over my tent. I knowed no others would come near so long as he was swinging there.

"Well, I had happy times in that island—Taiku-Tamba,

that was the name of it. Of course it was orkard at first, not knowing their lingo, but I soon picked that up, and in a month or two I could jabber away most as fast as they could.

"Me and the king—the one as I spoke to first, Kamie was his name—got particular thick. I showed him the working of a gun, and he, and all the rest too, soon found there was nothing supernattural about powder and shot.

"I served out the hatchets and things I'd brought from the wreck among them, and in fact everything I'd got was for the general use of all hands.

"The natives gave me a name of their own choosing, Lom-Tonga—Lom meaning white-man and Tonga good—Good white-man.

"They was nice people too, the quietest, inoffensive sort of folks I ever seed. You see Taiku-Tamba was a long ways off from anywheres else. I took the spy-glass and went up to the highest point soon after I arrived, and couldn't see any signs of land nowhere; and being out of the track, as I might say, our people wasn't interfered with, and that's one reason why they was so peaceable. Some war-canoes had paid them a visit once, though—years ago. There was nobody living as actually remembered it, but the tale had been handed down from one to another like.

"It appears this war-party landed somewhere about where I did—Welcome Bay, I called it—and played up regular ructions, burnt the village and chased the people into the woods, and took a lot prisoners. Some they

roasted and scaufed on the beach, and the rest was took away in the canoes when they left. So the tale went.

"Well, time passed quietly away, until one day, after I'd been there about six months, the king came running to me. 'Oh, Lom-Tonga!' cried he, quite panting with excitement, 'there's two canoes in sight. What shall we do?'

"'How far off are they?' said I.

"'A good ways off, but they're paddling straight for the beach, and in half an hour or so they'll be ashore.'

"So I took the spy-glass, and telling Kamie to muster all hands, with what weapons they'd got, down by where my tent was, I set off for the bay.

"There was the canoes right enough, war canoes too, as I made them out to be through the glass, and full of men.

"Well, I saw there was no time to lose, and by this time Kamie and about two hundred and fifty of our people had come down, so I set them to work. First we got one of the carronades in position close to the tent, and the other we took and planted about a hundred yards away to the left—both, do you see, being just on the edge of the wood.

"Of course nobody showed theirselves on the beach all the time.

"I took charge of one gun and Kamie had the other; and the muskets, pistols, cutlashes, and hatchets was served out so far as they'd go amongst them as I knowed could use them best, and the others had clubs and anything they could get hold of.

“I took half of the gang and Kamie had the rest, them as had firearms being equally divided between us.

“It didn’t take long to get so far, so I loaded my carronade, and then went to have a look how Kamie was getting on.

“His gun was all ready too, both of them being filled right up to their muzzles with musket-balls. So I says to him : ‘I shall fire into them as soon as the first canoe touches the beach. Then wait till you’ve counted five, and fire your gun. Keep cool,’ I says, ‘and be sure to aim straight ; load like lightning, and fire again. If they make a rush for me, give them another round and then come to my assistance. If they goes for you, I’ll do similar. If they divide and attack us both we must do the best we can, but if either of us gets the worst of it I’ll retreat towards you, or you retreat towards me, whichever it may be ; and should the battle go agin us, all that’s left is to make the best of their way to the top of the hill ; and don’t lose your arms. Fight like devils!’ I says, and with that I shook Kamie by the hand and went back to my gun.

“By this time the canoes was pretty close in. The savages was shouting and hollering and tum-tumming, and them as warn’t paddling was waving their weapons ; some of them I seed had got muskets.

“‘All right, my nobles,’ I says, ‘holler away ; there’s something here as’ll make you alter your tune afore long, I know.’

“Well, on they came, abreast of one another, so I trained my gun for where I seed they was going to

land, and presently I heard the canoes grate on the beach.

"Bang! I let's rip, and my small-arms party did likewise.

"Then, as I was loading again, I heard the reports from Kamie's division, and just had a glance at the canoes; there was the devil to pay amongst the savages, and heaps of them was knocked over.

"Before they got to their senses I let's 'em have another round, and then I seed the whole party coming full pelt for me.

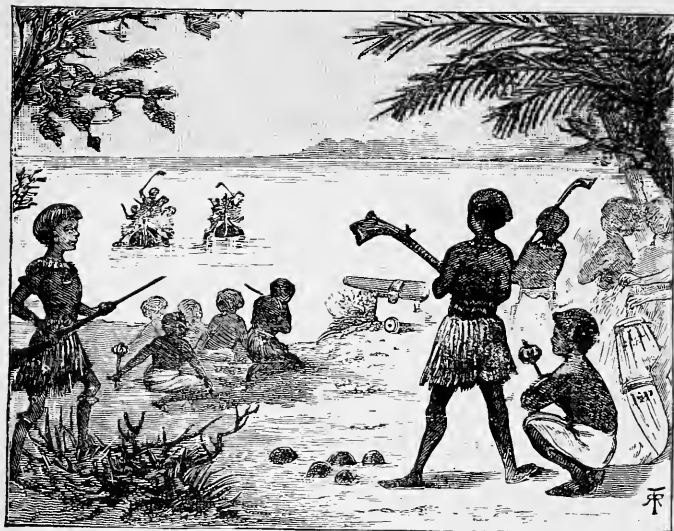
"I loaded again with a couple of shot and as many musket-balls as the gun would hold, and then sung out to my mob not to fire before I gave the word, and had a look round to see we was all ready.

"Then I heard Kamie again, and over went half a dozen more of the savages.

"On they came, screeching and yelling, most raving mad, and regular foaming with rage. When they got to about ten yards off, I shouted 'FIRE!' and bang went my gun again, and the muskets and pistols as well. Then I drewed my cutlash and gived a cheer, and out we dashed.

"The first one I comed to was a chief—he was very near as big as I am." (The boatswain stood over six feet.) "He aimed a blow at me with his club, but I dodged it, and gin him a sweeping cut across the neck as most took his head off.

"The next one had a spear; I knocked the point up and drove my cutlash right through his breast. Just



LANDING OF CANOES.

then, up came Kamie with his lot, and took the savages in the rear. Lord, what a scrimmage there was! Our men fought like tigers—more'n I expected, I must say; but then, you see, they knowed what it would be if they was beat.

“Well, we got the best of it, anyhow, and very soon the savages broke and made for the boats; but they was too late—not one ever got to the water's edge, for we gived chase and slaughtered the lot.

“There was no mercy showed, not a bit. So, as I tell you, we massacred every one, them as throwed down their arms and all, and the wounded ones we brained with their own clubs.

"In the canoes we found four poor captives, bound so tight they couldn't move; and more than that, there was the remains of two as was half eat!

"So I reckon we'd done a good morning's work.

"There was a hundred and thirteen of the cannibals lying about on the beach; so we gathered them up and loaded the canoes with their bodies, and when that was done the canoes was paddled out to sea and the corpses throwed overboard.

"Fourteen or fifteen of our side was killed, and most everybody was wounded. I had a spear run through my leg, and my left arm was broke by a club.

"Our own dead was buried the next day in a big grave we dug on the end of the sandy point. We had a proper funeral, and gave them all the honours of war.

"Well, life went on very peaceable and quiet again after this flare-up, and when Kamie's time for being king came to an end—it was the rule of the country to have a fresh one every five years—the people was that pleased with me for the way I helped them to beat the savages, that nothing would do but I must reign over them.

"So they made me king—King Lom-Tonga—and I lived in the big hut and had seven wives.

"This took place very soon after the battle, and the first thing I did as soon as the feasting and rejoicings was over, was to start my subjects on to building a stockade fort on a spot I'd selected as most convenient for the purpose, which was pretty near to where Kamie's gun had been placed.

"You see the bay was about the only place on the

island where anybody could land ; at all events 'twas the easiest place, and I felt sure if any more war-canoes came they'd be certain to make for the bay.

"First of all we cut down the trees (excepting the ones that grew along the edge of the beach) and cleared a space about a hundred yards square, and sawed all the good-sized timber into ten-foot lengths. As many as I wanted of these was sharpened at one end with an axe, and drove into the ground in pairs, each pair about nine feet apart, until we had enclosed a space about fifty yards square, big enough to hold all the people comfortably. Then the spaces in between the piles was filled in with logs placed one over the other, and that made a solid wall eight foot high all round, leaving holes here and there to shoot through, and a port-hole for the carronades at each corner.

"We made a gate on the land side, and contrived so it could be fastened securely on the inside of the square with a big beam of timber. Then I had a hut built in the middle, and in it we put the arms and ammunition ; and when it was all finished, I reckoned that if any more enemies came they'd most likely wish they'd stayed away.

"I arranged, in case the alarm should be given (for since the battle there'd always been somebody on the look-out), that so many should bring food into the fort, and so many water, and stationed all the able-bodied men so that each one would know where to go and what to do ; for though it wasn't likely any more war-canoes would come—the poor captives we'd rescued told us they stumbled on the island quite by accident, through

having been blowed out of their course—still it was just as well to be on the safe side ; and everybody felt more comfortable-like when the fort was finished.

“I had a look-out kept from the top of the hill, two men at a time, and relieved them every four hours ; so that if anything hove in sight, one would bring the news, while the other stopped and watched which way the canoes, or whatever else it was, was going.

“Thinks I to myself, perhaps a ship will come along, then they'd be sure to see her.

“But what do you want to see a ship for ? I goes on thinking. Ain't you had enough of ships, you stupid fool ? Ain't you satisfied with being well off ? No hauling out to leeward here ! No rousing out at eight bells to stand your watch in the cold and wet ! You'd sooner be in a ship's fore-castle than here, wouldn't you, you d—d discontented hound ?

“Well, I didn't know what answer to give to these questions ; however, thinks I, there ain't no harm in keeping a look-out, and if a ship does come along I needn't leave the island unless I like.

“ ‘ Kamie,' says I one day, as we was walking through the woods, ‘I've got a good mind to build a little vessel in which we can sail out as far as the wreck, to see if we can't pick up something useful.' I hadn't been out to the schooner since I left her, as twenty miles was a long way to venture in an open boat, and if it comed on to blow I allowed I mightn't fetch the island again. I wouldn't even trust to the war-canoes we'd took ; besides, I wanted a vessel that would carry more than they could.

“Well, Kamie was delighted with the notion, and was for commencing at once.

“Now when we was cutting down the trees to clear a space for the fort, I’d noticed one particular sort as looked like they’d split easy ; and just round the point to the west’ard of Welcome Bay was a regular grove of these trees, and Kamie and I walked over to see how it would do to build the vessel there, so we shouldn’t have to lug the timber any great distance.

“‘This here’s the very spot,’ says I, when we arrived down, ‘here in this little valley ; there’s trees enough round about to build a seventy-four. We’ll lay the stocks down here, close to the water’s edge,’ I says, ‘where we can launch her out as easy as shelling peas!’

“The next day I started the work. We tried first of all whether the trees would split easy, and found the grain ran so straight that with driving hardwood wedges we could get nice clean straight planks, as only wanted a bit of dubbing down with an axe afterwards to be near enough for what I wanted. All the tools we had was a hand-saw, a big hammer, an auger, two or three chisels, a pair of pincers, a jack-plane, and a few odds and ends—files, brad-awls, and the like.

“Besides which there was plenty of hatchets.

“Well, I started everybody to work in earnest, and got the keel laid the first day. I made that long enough by scarfing two pieces of timber together, well fastening them at the joint with long hardwood pins. The keel was about fifty feet long, twelve inches deep, and four inches thick. I hadn’t got a rule, but I very soon made

a lot ; the chisels told me all I wanted to know, for one was an inch and a half wide and another was an inch—leastways, that's was what was stamped on them—so making rules was easy enough.

“ Then I made a half-model, twenty-five inches long on the keel, and carved it out until it looked nice and true ; and when it was done I sawed it up crossways, every cut being an inch apart, and the pieces gave me the shape of my timbers, which in the ship would be two feet apart. I didn't know no other way of getting at it.

“ The timbers theirselves was the worst part of all. I rummaged the island all over for them, and whenever I saw a crooked tree or a big branch that I thought would do, I had it cut down and brought to the yard.

“ But 'twas a long time before I got enough. Howsumever, they was all finished at last, and pinned down to the keel, each one in its proper place.

“ While this was going on there was a gang constantly at work splitting planks, and they'd got a fine lot ready by the time the main timbers were all fixed.

“ How to bend them was the next job. I knew they ought to be steamed, so I set my wits to work to find out a way.

“ First I made a long box, about a foot square, open at one end, and caulked it well with dried grass. That was easy enough, but how to get steam was the difficulty.

“ Well, I thought of all sorts of things, and at last it struck me I might make some sort of earthenware jar that would stand the fire ; and after many attempts I at last managed to manufacture a big, shapeless concern

out of clay and sand, and when it was moulded I set it in a fire and made it red-hot, and kept piling on wood until I thought it was burnt enough, and then let the fire gradually die away.

"When my pot was cool I took it out, and was pleased to find it seemed hard enough to stand fire, so I made a cover out of the same stuff, with a hole in it, and burnt that too; and then I bent one of the musket barrels that we took from the cannibals into the shape I wanted, and led it from my boiler into the steamer through a hole in the closed end.

"When this was all done I commenced to make the garboard-streaks, and when they looked like they'd fit we put them in the steamer, closed up the open end, filled up the boiler, and made a fire underneath.

"The steam soon came, for it found its way out of the box here and there, and wherever I saw any escaping I dabbed a bit of clay to stop it; and when I thought my planks was ready we took them out, and found they'd bend easy enough.

"Lots was spoiled before I got the garboards fitted and pinned on to my liking. However, to cut a long story short, in three months' time I'd got the planking all done and the decks laid, and in another month the vessel was ready for launching, with her masts in and sails bent.

"The women folks made the sails; they was wonderful clever at weaving mats out of long tough grass as grew in parts of the island, and that's what they made the sails of.

"There was only two—a foresail and a mainsail—and

I had them made Chinee junk fashion, with battens sewn on about every three foot.

"I stepped the foremast right in the eyes of her, and the mainmast was exactly midways between her stem and stern posts.

"She looked a sweet, wholesome little craft, as she lay there on the stocks: quite proud of her I was, and very anxious to see how she would behave under sail.

"She was all cabin below, and there was a little companion and a step-ladder leading down, about half-way between the mainmast and the rudder.

"For'ard of the mainmast was a skylight. I was puzzled at first how to get light down through it, seeing as I hadn't got any glass—until I thought of the way they'd managed in our old church at home, where the windows in the steeple is filled in with boards put up slanting-dicular; so I made my skylight the same way, only I fitted shutters on the inside, so we could block the openings up in bad weather.

"Well, we got the ways under her—all greased with cocoa-nut oil first—and wedged her up clear of the stocks. I'd laid up a long hawser, made out of the same sort of grass as the sails, and one end of this we made fast to a tree, and took a turn with the other end aboard.

"She was all ready then, and of course 'most everybody was gathered round to see the launch.

"Kamie's littlest daughter was going to do the christening with one of my rum bottles, which I filled with water, as there wasn't any rum left.

"I had a look round to see everything was all right,

and then Kamie and me and four of the head men went aboard, and the little girl broke the bottle against the vessel's stem and named her the *Morita*—which was her own name—and then I sung out 'Knock away.' Down fell the dog-shores, and the little vessel began to move, slowly at first, but faster and faster, and at last she glided easily into the water, and floated there like a duck.

"Then we cheered, and the people ashore sang and danced and tum-tummed away in a great state of excitement.

"Well, we hauled her back alongside, and then took in the rest of her ballast—I'd had some put in beforehand, for fear she should turn turtle with us—and when she was properly in trim I hoisted the foresail and stood out to sea.

"There was just a nice little breeze off the land, and when we got well out clear of the point I gave her the mainsail, and brought her on a wind. She sailed like a witch, and no mistake, and didn't make a sup of water.

"I tried her all sorts of ways, but she pleased me best of all in going to wind'ard ; and as for staying, she'd come round like a top.

"After we'd been sailing about for an hour or so, I ran her back for the point, jammed her on the wind when she was round it, and headed for a little creek as ran a few hundred yards inland, about half a mile from where she was built. When we came to the entrance I shot her up in the wind, lowered down the sails, and in she went, carrying her way until she was a good dis-

tance up the creek ; and then I laid her alongside the bank, and we made her fast to a couple of trees with the long hawser.

“ The next day we started off for the wreck, with the wind about north-west and a smooth sea, just the sort of weather I wanted, and the little *Morita* slipped along in fine style, with my boat towing astern. I'd got Kamie and his two sons—Titee and Moro—and three of the natives with me ; I picked them for my regular crew, and explained the working of the sails and the gear and the helm to them, and that they soon picked up. What they'd be like in a breeze of wind was another matter, though. I didn't want to find out just yet, neither.

“ By-and-by I made out the wreck with my glass, and seed that the mainmast was still standing, after all these months. We ran down to leeward of the reef, giving it a good wide berth, and then gybed and stood in for the wreck, keeping the lead going all the time—the lead was a big stone with a line made fast round it—and keeping a good look-out ahead, for I didn't know how far the reef extended. When we got pretty close in I lowered my sails, and swept her along the rest of the way until I judged we was near enough, when Moro and me got into the boat and rowed away with one end of the long line, and made it fast to the wreck, and afterwards we went back for Kamie and Titee and two of the natives, leaving one in charge of the ship.

“ There warn't much alteration in the wreck, except that it had been hove higher up on the reef. The fore part had been broke up a good deal by the wash of

the sea, but the after part was most as sound as when I left.

“Well, everything we could get at that wasn’t spoiled was lowered into the boat and took off to the *Morita*. We worked on until late in the afternoon, and made a dozen trips, I should think.

“What I valued most of all was a small kedge anchor we fished up, and about half a dozen bolts of canvas I got out of the sail locker ; as for the sails, they was all spoiled.

“We took most of the cabin furniture—flags, charts, a barometer, a sextant, books, twine, needles, fishhooks, all the brass and iron we could wrench off, the rest of the muskets and cutlasses. In fact, every handy thing, as I said before—more than I can remember now.

“‘I think it’s going to blow,’ says I to Kamie, as we was making the last trip ; ‘so we’d better pack out of this as soon as possible.’ I didn’t like the looks of the sky at all ; it seemed to have clouded over all sudden like, and the sea-birds was circling about, screeching as if they wanted to give us the alarm.

“We put the last load aboard, and while the rest was stowing it away Moro went back and let go the line, and we pulled the sails up and stood away to the west’ard close hauled.

“The breeze was freshening up too, and very soon we had as much as she could stagger under. The little craft behaved splendidly, and didn’t take a drop of water aboard, except spray, though the seas was pretty heavy by now.

“Poor Kamie, and all the others but young Titee, was horrible sea-sick, so I got them to go below, and the boy stopped on deck with me.

“Well, seeing she behaved so well, I threshed her into it ; but after a bit I seed she wanted easing, so I gived the tiller to Titee, and ran and took down a couple of reefs in each sail : they was easy enough to reef ; all you had to do was to lower away the halliards. She went along better after that, so we stretched away to the west’ard on the same tack, for I wanted to get under the lee of the high cape as quick as I could, and when we was well to wind’ard I tacked. She came round like a spirit, and was full and away on the other tack while you could say ‘Jack Robinson.’

“There was a raging sea heaving in by now, and a whole gale of wind blowing ; so I reefed her down snug and let her rip. She did travel too, ramping full, about six points off the wind ; and though she was diving into it, and wet as a half-tide rock on deck, there wasn’t a sup of water below.

“I saw we should have the worst dusting off the point, but she shot through it like an arrow ; and though one heavy sea struck her, making her quiver again and deluging everything fore and aft, before the next one came rolling along she was under the lee of the land and in smooth water.

“I’d had quite enough of it too, and as for my crew, they was pretty near dead ; excepting young Titee, who thought ’twas great fun, and had stuck on deck all the time like a Briton.

"The people ashore had been very anxious for our safety, and there was scores of them on the beach looking out for the ship. When we was rounding Sandy Point a puff came along as shoved her lee-rail under water ; 'twas pretty smooth there, and she went round fluking, leaving a wake like a steamboat's astern.

"The folks stood on the point watching us come flying along. Regular bewildered they was ; they'd never seen a thing travel like that before in all their born days.

"Now that there was plenty of canvas, I'd got a great notion of altering the *Morita's* rig ; first I thought of turning her into a fore and aft schooner, and afterwards I reckoned a yawl rig would be more suitable. However, it all came to nothing, for, thought I, she did uncommon well under them Chinee sails, and perhaps if I shift the masts I'll only spoil her. So I turned to and made proper canvas sails, the same pattern as the mat ones, and when they was bent the little hooker looked all ship-shape and proper.

"Well, time rolled on, and I'd been three years or thereabouts on the island. Three pleasant years they was, too, and I was as happy as the day was long.

"Ay, ay ; we never knows when we're well off. I've often thought since what a fool I was to leave it.

"Howsumever, one morning me and Titee and two more went off in the *Morita* for a day's fishing, and when we'd catched half a dozen big baskets of fish—for they was very plentiful—we hove up and went for a bit of a cruise round the island.

"I was steering, and yarning away to Titee about one thing and another, and as we opened out clear of the north end of the island I saw something as made me leave off talking, and most brought my heart to a stand-still—for there was a full-rigged ship standing in for the land, and not more'n five miles off.

"I got the glass up and had a look at her—though I could hardly hold it steady, I was that excited—and saw she was an English man-o'-war.

"Well, it wasn't long, you may depend, before the *Morita* was round on the other tack and stretching off from the land towards the stranger, and then I went down below and fetched the red ensign and hoisted it.

"Presently I saw the ship's royals and topga'n'sails come in; they just fluttered for a moment, and was stowed a'most before you could say 'knife.' Immediately afterwards up went her courses, and then she rounded to and backed her maintopsail to wait for us.

"Well, we came dashing along, and when we was close enough I luffed up, and the two natives and me jumped into the boat. They rowed me off to the ship, and when we got alongside I climbed aboard.

"'Pray, sir, who are you?' asked a small midshipman, as I got over the side. When I told him, he was fit to bust with laughing, and so was all the rest that was standing round—for it hadn't struck me until then that I'd got no clothes on—leastways, nothing worth mentioning, and I dare say I did look a pretty rum object for an Englishman.

"I was glad enough, too, when somebody brought

word that the captain wanted to speak to me, for they was cutting all manner of jokes ; so I went aft on the poop and had a long yarn with him, and told him my adventures. Then he told me the ship's name—the *Mariner*—and said as how he'd got a lot of men down with scurvy, and that they was very short of fresh water. So of course I told him there was plenty of vegetables and good water in the island, and offered to pilot him in where the ship could lay as snug as possible, and as safe as if she was at Spithead.

“‘Very well,’ said he. ‘I’m very glad you came aboard, for this island isn’t down in the chart at all, and we were greatly surprised when we sighted it.’

“So they squared away again, and I stood alongside the wheel and piloted the *Mariner* safely into Welcome Bay, with the little *Morita* skimming along on our weather quarter, keeping up with the ship under her foresail only.

“Well, the *Mariner* lay there best part of a week, and, the day before she left, the captain—Hewitt was his name—sent a brass nine-pounder carronade ashore, with ammunition for it as well, and a lot of elm planking as a present for the natives ; for they’d been lending a hand to fill up the water-casks, and had sent enough vegetables and fresh meat aboard to last for a long time—as much as there was room for, anyhow.

“The next morning me and Kamie and a lot more went off in the whaler to thank the captain for his gift ; and after we’d had a little conversation—which I translated for the others—he says to me : ‘ Now, Brooks, we’re

homeward bound, as you know. I don't want to entice you away from the island, where you are no doubt very happy and comfortable ; but,' says he, 'if you want a passage to England I'll give you one, or, if you like, I'll ship you as boatswain's mate. Come back and tell me in an hour's time what you think of it.'

" 'Sir,' says I, 'I'll make my mind up now. I *am* happy and comfortable ashore, more'n I shall be again as long as I live ; but, for all that, I'll ship with you as boatswain's mate, and thank you for the offer. I've got friends and relations in England as my heart is aching to see, and at the same time there's people here as I'm terrible grieved to part with ; howsumever, sir,' I says, 'my mind is made up—I'll sail with you ; and, what's more, I won't go ashore again for fear I break my word.'

" 'Very well,' said Captain Hewitt, 'I hope you have decided for the best.' Then turning to the first lieutenant, 'Hands shorten in cable, Mr. Maxwell.'

" So I went to Kamie and the others, and told them I was going away in the ship—though I was mighty awkward in getting it out.

" 'Ah !' says Kamie, 'we knew that all along, ever since your countrymen came ;' and with that he turned aside and wept, while as for poor little Titee he most broke his heart.

" Well, I was very glad when the time came for them to leave me, for I was as grieved as they, every bit—in fact we was all regular cut up.

" I promised faithful I'd come back again, and, what's more, I meant it too at the time.

“At last we had to part, for the ship was gathering way through the water. They hung on alongside as long as possible, and when they had to let go I stood on the rail and waved my hand until I saw them turn the boat round, and pull slowly away for the beach.

“Then the captain called me, and told me to go to the purser and get a proper rig out ; and while we was talking, the gunner came up, and says he, ‘How shall I expend the carronade and the elm boards, sir ; shall I enter them as presented to the islanders ?’

“‘Certainly not,’ replied Captain Hewitt, ‘we never give away anything in the navy. Put it down thus : “Nine-pounder carronade—brass, one. Expended in repairing the galley funnel.” How much boarding went ashore ?’ ‘Two hundred and fifty feet, sir.’ ‘Very well, enter : “One-inch elm boarding—feet, two hundred and fifty. Expended in repairing the maintopsail, split off Cape Horn ; see ship’s log, May the—whatever it was, 19th I think. And the powder you can expend in saluting the king,’ said he, turning towards me and laughing. ‘Mind you cross your t’s and dot your i’s,’ he continued, ‘or the people at the Admiralty will be down on you like a hundred of bricks ; but I’ll wager my pay for the commission, that they’ll swallow the galley funnel and the maintopsail.’

“I went away then and got a proper rig out, and when I’d slung a hammock, and found out which was my mess, and all them little details, I came up on deck again to have a last look at the island.

“It was far astern by then, and I stood gazing at it

until it slowly faded away and finally merged in the blue of the eastern horizon. And that's the end of my yarn."

With that the boatswain rose and went off, leaving us to ponder over, and comment upon, what he had told us.





CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE TRADES.

ONE BOTTLE BETWEEN SIX OF US—SAILING OUT OF HER COPPER—
THE *RAJAH OF SARAWAK*—MUTINY AND MURDER—THE CHASE—
ALL HANDS TO BATTLE—CAPTURE OF THE *FORMOSA*.

I DIDN'T quite know whether we should be bweaking any wules by coming here to play cards, and so on," said Billy Looney one evening, as he sorted his hand while having a quiet game of whist in our berth—he and Featherstone being opposed to the doctor and Edwards. "Therefore I asked the captain's permission," he continued. "He told me we might come if the apprentices were willing, but that we weren't to stay later than eight o'clock, and were on no account to bwing any gwog. I wanted to pwovide a little whiskey, but he wouldn't allow it;—though," exclaimed Billy Looney, triumphantly, "we coaxed him until he gave us permission to bwing a bottle of shewwy. Here it is; have you got anything to dwink it fwom?"

"Yes," said Edwards, looking up from his cards and addressing me (Baby and I were seated on the edge of a bunk watching the game); "Tommy, get a hookpot, heave the tea-leaves overboard, and give it a good rinse out with some fresh water."

"There's the odd twick, and we're two by honours," exclaimed Billy Looney, with great glee, just as I returned from my errand. "That makes the wub. You played wemarkably well, Featherstone, though you did twump my best diamond, you young wogue."

Then Edwards drew the cork out of the sherry bottle in a most artistic manner, by knocking the neck off, and the wine was decanted into the hookpot.

So we all drank to a quick passage to Hong Kong; and the passengers added, "And a safe return to England."

"I wish," said Billy, when he had had a pull at the hookpot, "that the *Albatwoss* could sail as wapidly as a ship Mr. Harvey was telling me about this morning. It was one on which he was sailing—though, by the way, I think he desquibed it as a bwig. He told me, too, that though a ship might be a bwig, a bwig couldn't be a ship, or something of the sort. At any wate, this boat was in eighty north and thirty south, bound to Moscow, with the sheets all one way and the tacks another way, and all pwoper nautical desquiptions, which I took down at the time.

"And it was a wemarkably fast sailer—in fact it went so vewy wapidly that it sailed wight out of its own copper, and positively awived at Moscow on the Monday,

though its copper did not come in until the Fwiday. I put it all down in my log, that and a lot of other wemarkable stories which Mr. Harvey has told me at various times. I can't wemember half of them now, but I'll bwing the book some evening and wead them to you, if you like. I shall have a very intewesting collection by the time we awive at Hong Kong."

"Yes, I'm sure you will," said Edwards, gravely, and glancing at the doctor, who thereupon indulged in a palpable wink.

"I'm sure we should be delighted to hear you read your log," said Featherstone, "if it won't be too much trouble."

"Oh, I'll wead it to you with pleasure," replied Billy; and with that, time being up, he and the doctor left.

* * * * *

"Boy, you're asleep again!"

"Oh no, sir," I answered, waking with a start.

"Ah, but I say 'oh yes, sir,'" rejoined Mr. Harvey. "I must make you keep your eyes open in your watch on deck; so come up here to windward, you sleepy little owl! You are like a booby—once plant yourself down anywhere, and you're fast asleep in no time.

"I've been watching you for the last ten minutes," said he, when I got up alongside of him, "sitting on the bucket rack with your head bobbing about like a fisherman's float. If I'd dared to fall asleep in my watch on deck when I was your age, there's no knowing what would have happened; I should have had a good and faithful rope's-ending at the very least," and Mr.

Harvey went on to relate the hardships he had to endure when he first went to sea. I don't suppose for a moment what he said was true, but at all events he went on yarn-yarning away, until presently his voice sounded farther and farther off, and——

“The boy's asleep, by all that's glorious! This won't do, you know! Here's the officer of the watch condescending to talk to a brat of a boy, and in the middle of an interesting story finds his supposed listener fast asleep! Go back to leeward again, you small bundle of trumpery, and walk up and down until eight bells; let me catch you sitting down anywhere, and I'll break you up!”

So I went off and patrolled the lee side of the poop, and by-and-by was fast asleep again, still walking up and down, and turning about at the right places too.

Presently Mr. Harvey said, “Isn't it four bells, boy?” and got no answer. Then he came softly over and stood in my way as I was walking along, and there was a collision and a collapse, and I was picked up and shaken.

“Please don't, eh!—I'll please don't you! Serve you right if I shook your miserable little carcass all to bits! You'll be walking overboard one of these fine nights. I sha'n't stop the ship for you if you do. You'll have to get to Hong Kong by yourself the best way you can. I'll cure you or kill you, one of the six, see if I don't, so go for'ard and fetch a handspike.”

When it was brought, the mate ordered me to go on marching up and down the poop with the handspike

over my shoulder, in the same way that a soldier carries his rifle.

After a little while it began to feel dreadfully heavy, and hurt my shoulder, though I kept shifting it from one to another, and at last it pained so that I really couldn't carry it that way any longer ; so I tried holding it like a woman does a baby, and all sorts of ways—much to the amusement of the mate and Edwards, who was at the wheel. My difficulties seemed to give them great pleasure.

However, the more they laughed the tighter I clung to the bar, and struggled up and down until I was ready to drop, and at last the pain made me cry.

Then the mate said something to me, and I wasn't able to answer him, so he came over to leeward, and, saying he knew of a splendid cure for the sulks, gave me a good hard cut over the back with a rope's-end.

"Please don't, sir," I sobbed out, as he was preparing to repeat it. "I'm not sulky. I'm very sorry indeed for going to sleep, but I can't carry this dreadful thing any longer—I can't really. It is so heavy, and makes me ache all over. Please don't be angry."

"Well, well !" exclaimed Mr. Harvey, "put it down, then ; I didn't know it was like that. I'm very sorry I struck you, boy. There, don't cry, Tommy. Why you're trembling all over, and stiff as a frozen shirt. 'Pon my word, I am a brute. Come over to windward again, you poor, persecuted little person, and we will make it up."

"Why, Edwards," said Mr. Harvey, as we passed the

wheel, "here's a pretty sailor for you ! he can't carry a handspike for more than ten minutes."

"Ah," replied Edwards, "he's a young sailor, but a d—d old soldier ; he's like Paddy's pig—sooner be cuddled than kicked."

"No bad judge either," laughed the mate.

"There now," said he, seating himself on the rail and drawing me to his side—"all friends again now, aren't we ? I'll tell you a yarn, if you like, only don't go to sleep in the middle of it.

"Oh, you'll never go to sleep again in your watch on deck, eh ? There's a good boy, then, so we'll say no more about it.

"Well, I'm going to tell you of an adventure I had during my second voyage at sea.

"How long ago was that ? why nearly twenty-three years ago. I was about sixteen then, and half as big again as you, you little morsel.

"We shall pass Trīnadada some time to-morrow, which has reminded me of the story I'm going to tell you ; for at that time—twenty-three years ago—we had just passed Trinadada, in the *Rajah of Sarawak*, bound to Bombay.

"It was our morning watch on deck, and just before eight bells the mate sent me up to loose the fore-royal ; and when I got on the yard I saw and reported a sail right ahead, which was plainly in sight from that altitude, though it wasn't discernible on deck. You ain't going to sleep, are you ?"

No, sir ; indeed I'm not. You had been sent to

loose the fore-royal, and saw a sail right ahead which couldn't be seen from the deck."

"Good boy. Well, after breakfast I thought I'd go up and see whether we were gaining on the other ship or not. When I got to the top of the topgallant-rigging I had a look under the fort of the fore-royal, and there was the vessel plain enough, still right ahead, or nearly so, though it struck me as very peculiar that she was now standing across our course, for I could see her three masts. So I knew she must have altered her course some eight points since I first saw her over an hour ago.

"While I was looking and wondering at this, another object ahead caught my eye. I wasn't quite sure at first, but in a minute or two I made it out to be a boat, for I could see the flash of her oars in the sunshine. So I sang out—'On deck! Boat right ahead!'

"'A what?' replied Mr. Robinson, the second mate, who happened to be on the main-deck and heard my hail.

"'A boat, sir, with three people in her;' for we were rapidly approaching each other, and the boat was now plainly visible; two men were rowing, and the third was steering and baling out water.

"The second mate appeared to receive the news with distrust, for he made some remark which I didn't quite catch, and took no further notice of what I had said. So I went down on deck and told him of the suspicious movements of the vessel ahead, and assured him that there really was a boat pulling for our ship; so at last he went up as high as the foreyard to see for himself.

“‘Now where is your boat?’ said he, for I accompanied him.

“‘By jove, you’re right, boy!’ he exclaimed. ‘There’s something amiss. What it is we shall soon know, though,’ and with that he descended the rigging, and went aft to inform the captain.

“The news soon spread through the ship, and pretty soon nearly everybody was on deck.

“‘Clews of the mainsail up; let go your main bow-line!’ sang out the mate when we were about half a mile from the boat. ‘Forecastle head there! Stand by to heave them a line one hand! Lay aft the watch! Weather main-brace!’

“When the boat was alongside, the three men clambered aboard, and walked aft to where the captain and officers were standing. We couldn’t hear what they said, but their conversation appeared to be a very animated one, and as the watch were bracing the mainyard up again, Captain Brown (that was our skipper’s name) suddenly ordered the helm to be put hard up.

“‘Vast hauling the main-brace! Ease off the spanker sheet! Weather cro’jack braces! Port watch, square the foreyard’—were his next orders, given in rapid succession as the old *Rajah* fell off, bringing the wind on her port quarter.

“‘Out stunsail booms!’ came next. ‘Ghost of marines! what on earth’s up?’ ejaculated one of our watch, as he passed the heel lashing of the fore-topmast stunsail boom. ‘Heaven knows,’ said I, who was

assisting him. 'It looks as though we were in chase of that ship ahead,' I further remarked, laying in and bringing the ends of the topmast stunsail tack and lower halliards down on deck.

"Two of the men who had boarded us (by the way, their boat, which was half full of water, had been sent adrift) lent us a hand at making sail, and from them we learnt—when a favourable opportunity presented itself, which wasn't until we were ready to hoist the fore-topmast stunsail—that the ship ahead was the *Formosa*, from New York to Calcutta. That the crew had mutinied in the middle watch and murdered the captain and the second mate, and sent the mate, carpenter, and boatswain adrift in one of the boats, to make the best of their way to Trinadada—where they were proceeding when we so fortunately hove in sight.

"It also transpired that the *Formosa* had left Liverpool some three months before with an English crew, who, on arriving in New York, had been enticed out of the ship by boarding masters in the usual way (all but the boatswain and carpenter); and that the new crew which the captain had shipped for the rest of the voyage—he having obtained a freight for Calcutta—had been made up of a rather worse than usual type of the men, bad enough at the best of times, who are to be procured in New York.

"'Not an Englishman among 'em,' said the boatswain to his attentive listeners. 'Two or three Yankees, and the rest goodness knows what—Greeks and Italians mostly, I believe. The boarding master as put them

aboard didn't give a d—n what they was, so long as he got his money.

“ ‘Twasn't on account of bad treatment or nothen of the sort that this here mutiny took place ; 'twas a regular planned thing, and no mistake about it, and kept that quiet as neither me nor Chips knowed the least bit what was going on.

“ ‘ About two o'clock this morning they come into our berth and roused us out.

“ ‘ “Hullo,” says I, “what's up?”

“ ‘ “Come on deck, we want you,” said a voice as I knowed belonged to Big Ben, one of the Yanks.

“ ‘ Well, out we goes, and there was all hands gathered round.

“ ‘ “We've took possession of this ship,” says Big Ben, “'cause I guess we want her. The captain and the second mate wanted to argufuy the point, so—they're overboard,” says he, glancing at the rest.

“ ‘ “Sarve them right, too, for going agin us,” remarked another.

“ ‘ “Yesh, yesh ! sarve um right !” shouted the others.

“ ‘ “Where's the mate ?” said I.

“ ‘ “There he is, safe enough,” replied Ben, standing on one side and pointing towards the main-hatch. “It was his watch below, so we made him fast without any trouble.

“ ‘ “Now look here,” says Ben, “we don't want no more bloodshed over this job, if so be it's possible ; we've got a boat overboard, and you two and the mate can hop into her as soon as you like, and clear. I guess you'll

fetch the island all right if you're so minded ; if not——” He said no more, but shrugged up his shoulders and went away.

“ ‘ So we got into the boat, and you know the rest. No doubt they caught sight of you coming up astern sometime during the morning, and that's why they've squared away.

“ ‘ Our old packet is a pretty smart ship, but this one's a regular flyer,’ said the boatswain, taking a look over the rail at the water as it flashed past, ‘ and I reckon we shall overhaul the *Formosa* before long. I wonder what your captain's going to do.’

“ ‘ Looks like all hands to battle, brother,’ observed one of our crew, adding that he for one would like to have a slap at the mutineers—a sentiment which all the others cordially approved, as exactly coinciding with their own feelings on the subject.

“ When the stunsails were set, the captain ordered everybody to lay aft, and when we were mustered he told us in a few words that he intended to chase, and if possible retake, the ship ahead, and bring the murderers to justice. ‘ If there is anybody present,’ said he, in conclusion, ‘ who objects to fighting—if fighting should be necessary—in so good a cause, let him walk for'ard at once.’

“ No one stirred, but they stood looking at each other to see who would speak out, and at last one man said, ‘ We're with you, sir, one and all,’ and immediately retreated behind the others, as though he expected to be instantly put in irons for his audacity.

“However, the rest of the crew, finding the ice was broken, endorsed what he had said by giving three cheers for the captain, which was more in their line than speech-making, and showed what they meant a great deal better than any words would have done.

“‘That’s right, my hearties,’ cried the captain. ‘Get the guns up.’

“In those days most ships, especially those trading to the East Indies, were armed ; for almost any native craft in the China Sea, or anywhere round about, would turn pirate if she got a chance. We, in the *Rajah*, carried two nine and three eighteen-pounder carronades. The smaller guns were on the poop, two of the eighteens were on the main-deck, and the other one shipped on a pivot on the forecastle head. They were usually kept in the sail-locker out of the way until the ship got where they might be wanted, or went into harbour, and then we had the job of mounting them. We boys had to keep them polished while they were on deck, so the longer the guns remained below the better, from our point of view.

“You’re asleep, you vile thing !

“I’m not, sir, upon my word I’m not. I’ve been listening the whole time. You had to keep the guns clean while they were on deck, so the longer they remained below the better you liked it ; which is just as I should have felt,” said I, emphatically. “I wish you’d have the wheel and the binnacle carefully packed away under the sails, like your guns, the very first thing to-morrow morning.”

"Very well, I'll speak to the captain about it," said Mr. Harvey, laughing, and giving one of my ears a good pull.

"Well, we soon hoisted the guns out and put them in their places—all hands working with a will ; and while this was being done, we apprentices and the steward got up the small arms and ammunition, rammers, sponges, and gear belonging to the carronades, and so forth, and in half an hour we were ready for action, with the guns loaded and run out, and everybody properly stationed.

"By this time the *Formosa* was not more than seven or eight miles off, and we were rapidly nearing her. She had hauled her wind once, and of course we did the same ; but as on a wind we sailed two feet to her one, she was soon kept away before it again.

"I and another apprentice, called Dick Kendall, were stationed at one of the nine-pounders on the poop, and we had two of the passengers to help us—for they all insisted on taking part in whatever was going to happen, though the captain begged them to stay below out of the way.

"While we were loading our gun, I heard the mate of the *Formosa* telling our second mate that his ship carried two nine and one eighteen-pounder carronades, much the same sort as ours.

"I did so hope when I heard this that the mutineers would surrender without fighting.

"He also said that fifteen men were left aboard her, and that, in his opinion, they would engage us, and fight to the last."

"This made me feel quite creepy, and I had a sort of sensation in the pit of my stomach as though a large piece of ice had been suddenly placed there.

"However, thought I, we're in for it now ; and then I comforted myself somewhat by reflecting that we had thirty-two men, all told, to their fifteen, and two eighteen-pounders more than they possessed.

"Our stunsails were taken in when we got within a mile of the chase, and, even without their help, the *Rajah* was quickly lessening the distance between the two ships.

"Presently a flash and a cloud of white smoke shot out from the *Formosa's* quarter, and the piece of ice in my stomach felt as though it was rising up my backbone. The shot struck the water about a hundred yards ahead, knocking up a cloud of spray, and then flew whizzing through our main-topsail. Boom!—came the report immediately after.

"That's the eighteen-pounder,' said the captain, in quite his usual voice. 'They've mounted it on the poop, I see.'

"Then he sang out to the mate, who was in charge of the forecastle, to train his gun about a couple of points on the port bow, and directed the two eighteen-pounders on the main-deck to be trained as far on the bow as possible. While this was being done we, the afterguard, brailed in the spanker.

"'All ready with the guns, sir,' shouted the mate.

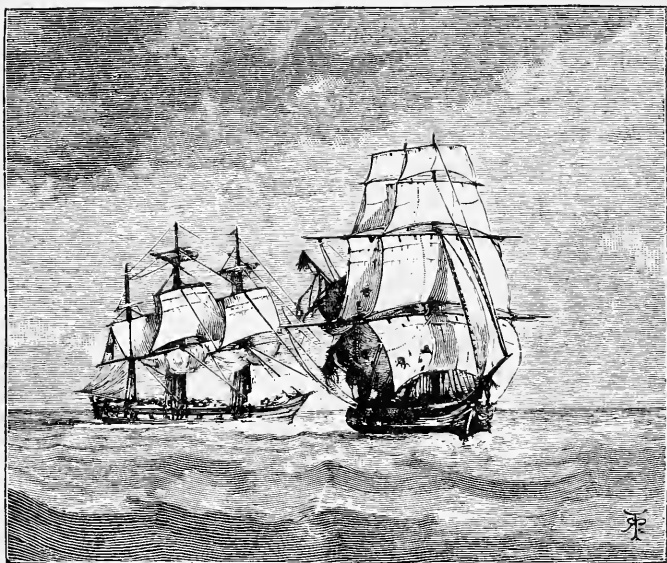
"'Very well,' replied the captain ; 'I'm going to run her off a bit, so fire as soon as your guns will bear. Load with grape afterwards.' Then to the man at the wheel, 'Port.'

“ ‘Port, sir.’

“Slowly the ship’s head fell off, and I saw the mate and the boatswain squinting anxiously along their guns.

“Presently the mate fired, and in a few seconds the boatswain followed suit.

“Bang! Bang!—roared the cannon.



THE RAJAH AND FORMOSA.

“ ‘Luff again,’ said the captain.

“ ‘Luff it is, sir,’ replied the helmsman.

“The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when smack came a shot right through the cabin skylight, showering splinters of wood and broken glass in all directions, fortunately without wounding anybody.

“ ‘Close work, that,’ remarked the captain.

“ My piece of ice had quite disappeared by now, and I felt more anxious to have a slap at the mutineers in return than otherwise.

“ When the smoke from our guns drove away to leeward, we saw that the *Formosa’s* main-topgallant-mast was knocked away. ‘Stand by the starboard gun and fire as soon as you can,’ roared the captain.

“ ‘Ay, ay, sir,’ replied the second mate.

“ ‘Luff you may—luff—let her come.’ Bang!

“ ‘That’s a good shot,’ cried the captain. ‘Bravo, Robinson! you’ve stirred them up, I’ll warrant; it struck her bulwarks just abaft the mainmast.’

“ We were now quite close to the chase—so close, in fact, that I could plainly see half a dozen of the mutineers hurriedly laying the gun they had got on her poop; and no doubt in a few moments we should have had another messenger from them, but the mate put a stop to their designs by plumping a charge of grape right into their midst, knocking over three or four, and making the others, including the man who was steering, beat a hasty retreat on to the main-deck, leaving the gun undischarged.

“ We at this moment were slowly passing under the *Formosa’s* stern; and she, no one being at the wheel, was rapidly coming up in the wind.

“ As we went by, our bow and starboard guns were both fired at point-blank range, raking her decks fore and aft, and immediately afterwards our helm was put hard up, and the captain sang out, ‘Stand by to board!’

“The mutineers, seeing what we were going to do, came rushing aft in a body and gained the poop, which they had scarcely reached when the two ships glided together, and then our men, headed by the mate, swarmed over her rail like a pack of hounds dashing over a hedge; and at the same moment the captain, followed by the passengers and the afterguard—all but we apprentices, whom he had expressly ordered not to leave the ship—leapt from our poop on to the *Formosa’s*, and, giving a hearty cheer, rushed to the attack.

“Then Dick and I trained our little nine-pounder right straight for the mutineers, who had, we saw, repulsed the first attack of our captain and his party.

“One of the *Formosa’s* crew, a huge black, caught sight of our movements, and he, cutlass in hand, bounded on to our poop rail just as we were about to fire. As he came flying over I presented my pistol at his head, shut my eyes, and fired. The next moment I was dashed senseless to the deck, though, while falling, I heard the report of our little gun.

“‘The boy’s not dead—he’s only stunned; the nigger he shot fell over him,’ I heard some one say. Then a bucket of water was poured over my head, and I opened my eyes.

“‘There you are; I told you so. He’s all right—worth forty dead men, anyhow.’

“‘Can you stand up, sonny?’ asked the speaker, one of our men, assisting me to rise.

“‘You had a narrow squeak for it that time, my bold hero; the darkie’s cutlass went through your jacket and

more'n an inch into the deck. You plumbed him proper though, right slick through the head.'

" 'There you are—look for yourself,' said he, seeing I was able to stand.

"At my feet lay the great negro, and right in the middle of his forehead was the hole my bullet had made, from which a tiny stream of blood was slowly trickling on to the white deck.

" 'Have we won ?'

" 'I should think we have ! That charge of grape you and Dicky planted amongst them done the trick ; they never got over it—it throwed them into confusion, and we overpowered them before they got their wits again.'

"That night the two ships were standing across the south-east trades for St. Helena, which island we reached in ten days, when the *Formosa* and the mutineers, eight in number, whom we had captured alive, were handed over to the proper authorities.

"The men were put on their trial at once, promptly found guilty, and as promptly hanged—which fate they richly deserved.

"Great praise was awarded to the captain, officers, and crew of our ship for the way in which we had acted ; and, in addition to the very respectable sum of salvage-money that we had fairly earned, the underwriters at Lloyds—when the *Rajah* returned to England at the end of her voyage—presented each of us with a handsome gold watch, bearing a suitable inscription, as a memento of the affair.

"There, that's all, and, as you haven't dozed off once all through my yarn, you shall have your reward. Go down into my berth and cut me up a pipe of tobacco.

"Why, you haven't half lighted it; what a boy you are, to be sure—neither useful nor ornamental!" said Mr. Harvey, when I returned with his pipe. "Unship the binnacle lamp and bring it along; I see I must light my pipe myself. That'll do; now put it back again, and go and fetch the tail-tackle—it is on the longboat.

"That's you. Jump up on the boom, and put it on the gaff-topsail-sheet as high as you can reach.

"Can you make a rolling hitch, though?"

"Very well, then, let's see you do it; and if it slips I'll let daylight through you. Haul your turns taut.

"Now hook on the other block to that eyebolt, and take the fall under a pin, while I swig. Take it over the next one as well, else you won't be able to hold it.

"Look out—Hey, *hip*! Gracious me! you slacked a foot. Take it under another pin then, you graven image! What are you laughing at? Now, again so!

"That'll do," said the mate, belaying the gaff-topsail sheet. "Take the tackle where you found it, and come back here again.

"Go and look at the time," said he, when I returned. "Oh, nearly seven bells is it? Very well—now it's your turn to spin me a yarn.

"Where do your people live?"

"At Hampstead, sir."

"What is your father?—Oh, a stockbroker, is he? Well, why didn't you stop ashore breaking stocks (or

breaking stones either, for the matter of that), instead of coming to sea?"

"My three brothers are in the dad's office, sir," I replied. "But I hate the city, and detest accounts and all that sort of thing, so I made up my mind to go to sea, if they'd let me."

"More fool you," observed Mr. Harvey. "You wouldn't have been so keen on it if you'd known as much about the sea then as you do now, eh?"

"Well, never mind," continued he, seeing I was at a loss what to say. "There's not much pleasure in it anyhow. A man who goes to sea for pleasure would certainly go to h—l for pastime."

"I know where Hampstead is, though I've only been there once in my life. I walked over from Highgate (where a cousin of mine lives) about five years ago, along a fine broad road over the top of the Heath."

"I remember there was a pond at one end of the road, close by a flagstaff, and two little boys were sailing a small schooner in it when I walked past. They'd got their sheets all too flat, and the sails weren't half set; so I stopped and fixed her off for them, and made her beat a big cutter belonging to another boy, who——"

"Why," exclaimed I, almost breathless with excitement, and interrupting the mate, "those two boys were my brother and I; and the lady who came up and thanked you for showing us how to set the sails was the *mater*. Only fancy! isn't it strange? I remember it all as well as possible; and you were asked in to lunch,

and said you hadn't time to stay because you had to go back to your ship, which was to sail the next day. We asked you her name, and you told us the *Fiery Cross*—and we altered our schooner's name the very next day into *Fiery Cross*. Oh! how——”

“Belay, belay!” interrupted the mate, laughing heartily. “Here's a clatter I've brought down about my ears! You chatterbox! your tongue's flapping at the rate of sixteen to the dozen.

“So you were one of the little boys—the younger, I suppose? Well, it is rather strange that we should be shipmates—after all. I must come up to Hampstead again when the ship arrives home, and see if I'll get another invitation.”

“Oh, *do*!—everybody will be so glad to see you,” I exclaimed. “So remember, that's a promise, isn't it?”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Harvey, “I will with pleasure; that is if we're still good friends and you don't alter your mind by then. 'Tis a pretty long time to look forward to, and maybe I'll have to start you carrying a handspike, or give you a few rope's-endings, in the meantime; then perhaps you'll think better of it. There now, don't look so dreadfully solemn; I'm only joking. You sha'n't carry another handspike by my orders, anyway, and as for rope's-ending——”

“I'll never deserve one again, sir!”

“Well, you didn't deserve it this time,” said Mr. Harvey, kindly. “And you'll have to alter a very great deal, as far as I can see, before you do. I'm more afraid of your being spoiled by petting than by punish-

ing—you and Master Baby as well. I've seen lots of boys get cheeky and insolent through being too kindly treated ; though I must say you two haven't taken the slightest advantage so far, and you are just as respectful and willing and obedient as if—well, as if you had a sound licking every morning before breakfast.

“You are both great favourites with everybody in the ship ; don't presume on people's kindness, or you won't continue so. Personally, I shall be grieved if I ever have cause to regret having treated you with familiarity, for I'm very fond of you both.

“There now—'t isn't often the mate of a ship talks like that, I can tell you. Don't forget what I have said ; and now run and look at the time, for something tells me it is pretty close on eight bells.”





CHAPTER IX.

LEISURE HOURS.

TRINADADA—JACK BARRETT'S REGIMENT—A NOVEL LAUNCH—STAR-
GAZING PIE—THE BROTHERS WITHYCOMBE—*THE MERMAID*—A
PERILOUS PASSAGE—ALL HANDS OVERBOARD—SAFE ARRIVAL.

THE dawn was just breaking when we came on deck again at four o'clock, though a few solitary stars were still shining overhead, and away in the far-west horizon the pale light of the setting moon was feebly illuminating the sky from behind a heavy bank of clouds which hung dark and motionless over the surface of the ocean.

"Tommy, boy, go for'ard and tell the look-out to jump up on the fore-yard and see if the island is in sight. It should be by now, though it is rather too dark yet to make anything out from on deck.

"Go up yourself, if you like—I know that's what you want to do—and if you see it, sing out 'Land oh!' like a man; you'll find it will be about three or four points on the lee-bow."

Nothing was in sight from the fore-yard, though I

fancied there was a portion of the darkness ahead that seemed more substantial than the rest ; so I mounted higher, and wasn't satisfied until I was seated on the royal-yard—and there was the island of Trinadada, just where Mr. Harvey had said it would be, with its upper part standing boldly out, richly crimsoned with the rays of the rising sun, while its base was still wrapped in the blackness of the rapidly vanishing night.

“Land oh ! three points on the lee-bow, sir,” I shouted, in the nearest approach to a voice of thunder that my limited means would allow of.

“Fore-royal-yard there !” sang out the mate, who had come for'ard on hearing me hail. “Point out the direction.”

I did so, and then he asked me how far off I thought it was, and I told him about five miles.

“Five grandmothers !” I heard him exclaim, and then Barrett, who was on the forecastle head, looked up at me and grinned.

“All right, we can see it from on deck now, so you needn't stop projicking up there any longer.”

“How far off is it really, Barrett ?” asked I, on arriving on deck.

“Oh, about twenty miles ; leastways that's what the mate says, and I dessay he ain't far out.”

“It doesn't look anything like so far away,” I ventured to observe.

“Don't it, though ? he's most likely wrong, then ; you'd best go and tell him so, before he runs the ship smack up agin it through a herrer of judgment. I've

been ashore there once, and don't perticklar want to go again."

"Oh, have you?" I cried, climbing up the ladder which led to the topgallant-forecastle. "Please tell me what it's like. Were you shipwrecked there?"

"No, I warn't shipwrecked," replied Barrett. "I come in a surveying ship, and there was a party landed to take meridians and altitudes, for one thing, and to shoot birds and kick up their heels ashore for another ; and I was one of the boat's crew as went.

"We had a job to find a landing-place, too ; there's no beach anywhere, nothing but rocks wherever you look.

"No, there ain't nobody as lives there, 'cept birds, and they'm 'most all one sort ; I forget what they was called, but while we was cruising round looking for a likely place to land, we see a battalion of them birds drilling.

"If you don't believe what I'm saying, you'd best pack up and go aft ; I tell you they was drilling, and all falled in two thick, in proper companies, like the marines on Southsea common—and there was the old general perched on a rock in front, hollering, 'Column will advance ! Right wheel into line !' and all the rest of it."

This was too absurd, and I couldn't help laughing right out at the bare idea of a regiment of birds, and although I asked pardon for interrupting, and begged Barrett to tell me more about the island, he wouldn't say another word, contenting himself with remarking satirically that boys were men nowadays, and men were d—d old humbugs ; that I would laugh if my grandmother's wig was on fire, &c.

Quite three hours elapsed before we were abreast of the island ; so, as the ship was going seven knots, my estimate of the distance was clearly not to be compared with Mr. Harvey's for accuracy.

It was a grand sight, that rugged and almost inaccessible rock, standing boldly up out of the depths of the vast Atlantic, all alone in its wild grandeur.

Desolate and deserted, with no sound to break the dread silence save the hoarse cries of the sea-birds, and the roar of the dashing waves, eternally expending their relentless but impotent fury against its impregnable foundations.¹

A slight squall struck our ship just as we were passing Trinadada, and for a few moments a drenching rain fell. It drove away to leeward in a very short time, thus effectually obscuring the island, and I think one of the loveliest sights I ever saw was presented as the land gradually emerged from the driving rain until it once more stood clearly and sharply out in the vivid sunshine, with its rugged outline boldly defined against the background of sombre cloud ; while over the lofty pinnacle of rock at its north end hung a gorgeous rainbow.

"Well, what's wrong?" exclaimed Mr. Harvey, as I stood gazing at this beautiful and ever changing scene. "No work, or struck for higher wages?"

"Oh, yes, it's very pretty, no doubt—quite handsome, in fact. So will the brass-work be when you've finished cleaning it ; that binnacle isn't half polished, so give it

¹ Thanks, Edwards, that is very nice ; I fancy I've read something like it before, though, don't you?—T. D.

another rub over. Come, you're very tame this morning."

Oh dear! thought I, what a dreadful man he is, to be sure!

This was Sunday, I must tell you, and after the decks were washed down, brass-work cleaned, and live stock fed, there was nothing else to do for the rest of the day—except, of course, any sail trimming that might be necessary, though here in the south-east trades we might reasonably expect to pass the day in peace and quietness, without having any pulling and hauling to do.

In fine weather we used always to have a good wash every Sunday morning at least, and oftener if it rained and we were able to catch any water.

For the Sunday morning wash, though, we used to save a little out of every day's allowance of fresh water—only three quarts each were served out daily, which had to do for cooking and drinking purposes, let me tell you—and this morning we had about half a bucketful in which, first Edwards and Featherstone, and then Baby and I made shift to cleanse ourselves as best we might; for every one in the ship is expected to be clean and tidy on Sunday, though as for the other days of the week, we are simply up to our necks in filth the whole time.

"The water's fairly thick, ain't it, Tommy?" said Baby, as we seated ourselves one on each side of the bucket.

"Like pea-soup," I replied. "However, we sha'n't want to use much soap, and we can rinse ourselves with

salt water; there's plenty of that about here, at all events."

"Come, look sharp, you two; don't sit there gossiping all the morning," said Featherstone, looking out over the edge of his bunk, in which he was lying, reading a book and smoking.

"There's the berth to be tidied, and the soapsuds to be cleaned up; so hurry along, or you won't be done by dinner-time."

"And mind you wash your necks, you dirty little pigs," said Edwards, who was busily employed turning over the contents of his chest. "And don't leave any holidays; for I shall inspect you both presently, and woe betide if I find you don't come up to the standard."

So we scrubbed and spluttered away, and when we were washed and quite shining with friction, arrayed in clean clothes and generally presentable, we were critically and exhaustively examined by Edwards.

"There's some dirt in that ear, I see," he observed, "and this nose requires scraping, all down one side and in the corner there; otherwise you appear to be clean and in your right minds."

"I'd scrub them all over with sand and canvas if it wasn't too much trouble," said Featherstone, yawning, and shutting up his book.

"You're wanted on the poop, both of you," said the steward, looking in at the doorway.

"Who said so?" asked Baby.

"Cap'n," was all the answer the steward deigned to give, as he walked off to the galley.

What a lark it is ! On Sundays, when we are all clean and tidily dressed, there is a vast amount of quarter-deck etiquette displayed.

On a week-day, when the captain makes his first appearance on the poop—which is generally after breakfast—the officer of the watch greets him with a simple “Good-morning, sir ;” while as for us boys, we don’t think of presuming to address him, nor expect to be even noticed, and neither does anybody else.

But on Sundays, when the captain appears he expects to be properly received by the mate or second mate, whichever is on deck ; while if any of the crew happen to be about, they touch their caps with highly commendable deference, and their salute is as politely returned.

So when Baby and I got on the poop, and had marched aft—along the lee side, of course—we stood waiting for the captain to notice us, and when he turned and looked we raised our caps in the politest possible manner, and he bowed with equal grace and elegance, and called us over to the weather side, where he, the second mate, and the passengers were standing.

“Well, young gentlemen,” said he (we are “young gentlemen,” so please you, on Sundays), in a sort of here-we-are-again tone which gave one the impression that we hadn’t met since the preceding Sabbath, though as a matter of fact he had been on deck at an early hour to look at the island, and almost stumbled over me while I was kneeling down and polishing the bottom rim of the binnacle, taking no more notice of my

existence then than if I had simply been a ring-bolt in which he had caught his foot.

But now, of course, everything was very different, and Sunday had officially commenced, so he was very pleasant and good-humoured, and chatted away to us and the others about all sorts of things ; and I repeated what Barrett had told me about the regiment of penguins, which made everybody laugh, and we were all as jolly as possible. And talking of islands brought the boatswain's yarn to my memory, and I ventured to sketch off the prominent portions of his story—of how the savages had been defeated, and the *Morita* built, and so forth, which seemed to please my listeners immensely.

Soon afterwards the second mate took up the conversation, and told us how his father, who was an old retired captain, had built a little yacht, about the same size as the *Morita*, at a place on the Devonshire coast called Wilderscombe, where, after leaving off the sea, he had taken up his abode:

"I was only a very small boy at the time," said Mr. Locke, "but I remember it all as well as possible, for it was a thing that caused a great deal of excitement in the town, and indeed the old people talk about it to this day. For my father could not get a place to build his yacht in anywhere near the sea, so more out of bravado than anything else, I believe, he hired a small field on the top of a hill near the parish church, quite a mile away from the harbour, and there he and his right-hand man, Tom Vickery—who had sailed with him as carpenter for many years—laid the keel of the new yacht.

“Of course there was a good deal of chaff, and many were the sarcastic remarks made by the neighbours when the news of what was going on spread abroad, the general conclusion arrived at being that, like Robinson Crusoe’s boat, she would never be launched.

“However, as Tom Vickery said to Captain Culliford, when the latter, who was a great friend of my father’s, had expressed himself rather freely on what he was pleased to call ‘this infernal nonsensical tomfoolery.’ ‘Yu lave us aloone; us know what us be ’bout, I can tell ’ee; us baint so mazed as folks think for. If Cap’n Locke saith her’ll be launched, her’s bound to go. Iss fy.’

“And as Tom implicitly believed that anything Captain Locke said had to be done, would be done, that the yacht would eventually find herself afloat was quite a foregone conclusion in his mind. So, having thus expressed his sentiments on the subject, he devoted his whole energy to the work he had in hand when Captain Culliford interrupted him, and hammered away with such vehemence that the captain’s reply was perfectly inaudible; so he simply walked off shrugging his shoulders, and opining that my father and Tom were a couple of d—d fools, who ought to be strait-waistcoated.

“Well, the yacht was finished at last, and ready for launching. Everybody in the town, and indeed for miles round, talked of scarcely anything else, and many were the ingenious theories brought forward and wrangled over as to the method to be employed and the route to be chosen, for they couldn’t get a word of explanation from my father or Tom, or from any of the

workmen—and indeed these latter knew no more than anybody else.

“All the arrangements were made with perfect secrecy, and at last the day that had been decided upon for the launch arrived.

“At break of day, my father and Tom and a whole gang of men arrived in the field, as had been so arranged on the previous evening; and when there was light enough they set to work, and, with the assistance of a few powerful screw-jacks, they lifted the yacht bodily off the stocks, which were then all cleared away.

“At eight o’clock—which time had also been arranged previously—a great smacking of whips and trampling of horses was heard in the road leading to the field, and these sounds were presently followed by the appearance of about thirty powerful horses with their drivers and six stone-waggon—those with very small wheels—which had been borrowed for the occasion from Mr. Slocombe, the mason.

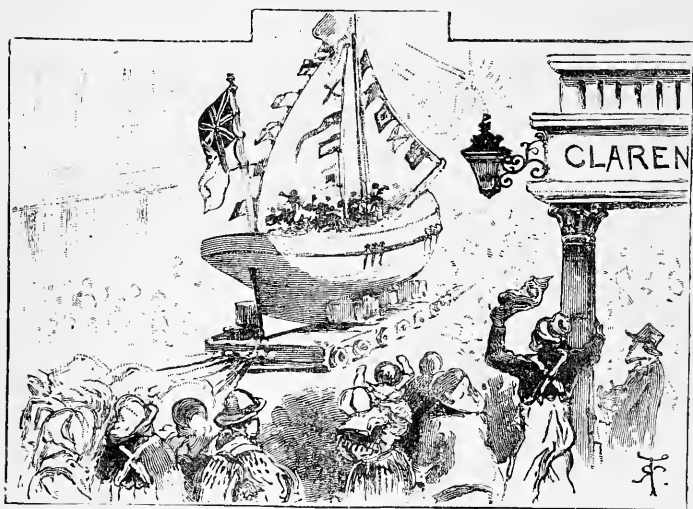
“A road of planks was quickly formed from under the vessel to the hard roadway, and the trollies were then, one by one, rolled underneath her keel, and, being placed in their proper positions, the yacht was slowly and carefully lowered until her whole weight was fairly distributed on them, when she was securely wedged and chocked in her position.

“‘Now the band—jump aboard!’ sang out my father as these arrangements were completed—for he’d engaged a band, bless you, and by this time the hedges were lined with an eager crowd of onlookers.

“‘Hook on!’ was the next order, and the thirty horses were harnessed to the stone carriages in double quick time, amidst breathless excitement.

“‘Now start—handsomely, don’t jerk her!’ shouted my father. Then to the band—‘Strike up, “Off she goes!”’

“The band played, the carters shouted and smacked



LAUNCHING THE YACHT.

their whips, and as the yacht began to move, the people cheered with tremendous vigour. In a very few minutes the high-road was safely reached, and then, after a short rest, the horses were again put in motion, and the yacht, with colours flying, the band playing, and the concourse of spectators cheering and shouting, was slowly and carefully piloted, past the old church, and then right

down through the main streets of the town towards the harbour.

“The procession stopped outside the principal inn in the High Street for five minutes or so, and unlimited beer was provided for any who chose to ask for it. The only accident that occurred during the day was when the horses were again started—for they did so with a slight jerk, and Dick Harding, the drummer, was precipitated through the head of his own drum, and little Jack Dadds, the fifer, fell overboard, fortunately into a cart-load of cabbages, which was standing alongside, as luck would have it.

“Well, everything went off with complete success; and though at one place, where the street turns at a right angle, a part of the corner of a house had to be cut away to allow the yacht to pass, in less than an hour from the time she was first put in motion she was safely dragged on to the strand at the head of the harbour, where, after she had been drawn as far into the rising water as the horses could wade, she was left for the present.

“A long hawser was then rove through a block hooked to the ring of one of the mooring buoys; one end was made fast aboard, and the other end was brought ashore. As the tide rose, everybody clapped on to the rope, and by and by, amidst tremendous cheering, the yacht began to move, and quickly gliding clear of the trollies, floated safe and sound alongside the buoy.

“‘I knawed he’d du et; didn’ I zay so? Whuse mazed now, I shou’d like for knaw! I’ve a gude mind for scat tha alongside the mowth, yu Jan Gibbs, for what yu’ve

a-zaid 'bout my maister, whiles us was building the little craft. Now what have 'ee got to zay?' exclaimed Tom, who had been crowing in this style to several of the surrounding fishermen, when the work was all done, and the yacht had been hauled alongside the quay in readiness to have her masts got in.

"'Why, look here, ef my cap'n, Cap'n Robert Locke, was for tell me he was gwain to fetch th' old church down 'pon top the kay where us be now stood, I should know thet down he'd hev to come. He'd hav'n down—mark my words!'"

"I didn't know you were a west-countryman and came from the land of hakey vish and star-gazing pie," said the captain to Mr. Locke, when we had finished laughing at the droll way in which he had concluded his story.

"I was born in Devonshire, sir," replied he, "but I haven't been there for any length of time since I was thirteen or fourteen years old."

"Will you please tell me what is a star-gazing pie?" inquired Baby.

"Well," said the second mate, and laughing merrily, "it is a pie made of pilchards, and all their heads are stuck out through the top crust."

"What a vewy peculiaw accent Devonshire people have!" said Billy Looney. "I went there last summer for my holiday, and weally I couldn't make out what they said; though, to be sure, my language was equally unintelligible to them, and at times it was quite awkward. I wefer, of course, to the people in the inland villages."

"I love the dear old brogue," said Mr. Locke; "it always sounds so homely and good. I think the pleasantest words I ever heard were those old Tom accosted me with the first time I came home from sea. 'Dear boy! how he is a-grawed—grawed up quite a maan, sure 'nough,' said he, as I got off the coach.

"I remember once showing a photograph of Charing Cross, taken at about mid-day—the place, as usual at that time, swarming with cabs, 'busses, carriages, and foot passengers—to an old countryman who called at our house to sell eggs and butter; I don't suppose the poor old chap had ever been out of the county in his life.

"'There,' said I, 'that's a picture of part of London.'

"He looked at it, and after a good inspection slowly ejaculated, 'Ay, ay!—My!—Lonnon, es et! Beg place, sure 'nough! Aw! *Market-daay, I see!*'"

This little anecdote amused us all very much, for Mr. Locke imitated the voice of the old countryman to perfection.

Billy Looney, however, couldn't see the joke, and caused more merriment by gravely assuring us that there was no special market-day in London.

"I commanded a west-country ship once," remarked the captain; "she was the *Firefly*, of Plymouth, a small full-rigged ship of about five hundred tons register. The officers and crew were all Devonshire men, and about as smart a lot of seamen as any one could wish to be ship-mates with. Fine fellows, every one—young, merry, and as active as cats.

"The *Firefly* belonged to two brothers, John and

Richard Withycombe ; both were pretty old, and both were rather peculiar in their ways, language, and general appearance. John, the elder, was a stumpy, thickset man ; he had a wizened, puckered-up little face, with a thick fringe of white stubborn hair all round it. End on, you couldn't tell where his beard left off and his hair began ; for it was all alike all the way round, sticking straight out like the bristles of a scrubbing-brush. In fact he always reminded me of a monkey peeping out of a white muff.

“ Richard, the other brother, had no hair at all, not a scrap ; so to make up for it he wore a curly brown wig. The funny part of it was that this confounded wig gave the old fellow a sort of boyish, roguish look, which was quite the opposite of his real character. He was the business man of the two, and so I had more to do with him than with John ; and really—I'm not joking—it was difficult at times to plod through accounts and so on with him, for there he would be sitting, talking so solemnly about casks of beef and barrels of flour, with that diabolical wig of his, rakishly cocked on one side of his head, giving his face a sort of ‘Come into the garden, Maud’ appearance that was too ridiculous.

“ I got command of the *Firefly* in rather a peculiar manner too. After I had passed my examination for master I took it into my head that I'd like a holiday ; so instead of hunting about for a ship I got into a train at Paddington and went right down to Dawlish, where some friends of mine were staying, and there I spent a very pleasant fortnight or so.

"I'd never been to Plymouth, at least not long enough to have a ramble about the town, though I'd lain in the Sound often enough, and so one day I thought I might as well have a look at that great naval centre now I was so close and had plenty of time ; so I ran over and spent a day in strolling about seeing what was to be seen.

"Well, coming back to the station in the evening, I happened to walk behind two persons bound the same way as myself, and I overheard one say, 'Brother John, she must sail to-morrow ; the *Mermaid* must sail by the morning's tide, even if she goes without her captain.'

"'But, Brother Richard, she can't go without her captain.'

"'Yes, Brother John, she can, for if the captain is not well enough by the morning, I will take charge of her and take her round to Cardiff myself—though it will be extremely awkward, now that there are so many things to see to in respect of the *Firefly*.'

"'Nonsense, Brother Richard ; how can you go ? Besides, you haven't been to sea for so many years that you would certainly be sick all the time. Let us try to get some one to take charge of the *Mermaid* just for this trip, for I know Captain Thompson will not be able to leave his bed for a week at least.'

"'Brother John, I have been inquiring this afternoon and I cannot hear of anybody to take his place.' Then satirically, 'Of course not, that is always the way. If we didn't want a man there would be processions of them coming up to the office. It almost makes me inclined to d—n ; but I won't.'

“‘No doubt it is very difficult to get anybody at a moment’s notice ; perhaps we may hear of some one to-morrow, and——’

“‘No ; she shall sail by the morning’s tide. Brother John, I have made my mind up, so say no more about it ; I will take the schooner to Cardiff myself.’

“Well, thought I, why not offer my services ; it may lead to something—who knows ? So I quickened my steps, and, apologizing for interrupting, I spoke to the persons whose conversation I had overheard, and, mentioning who I was, I wound up by volunteering to take charge of their schooner for this one voyage. After a short talk, during which, as luck would have it, I found that they knew the firm I served my time with, they gladly accepted my offer, and told me to join the ship at ten o’clock the next morning. So I went back to Dawlish, put a few old things and a shirt or two into my bag, and next day I presented myself at the time and place appointed. Half an hour after that the *Mermaid* was buzzing through the water of the Sound, with a fine fresh breeze off the land.

“Well, we arrived at Cardiff ; discharged, and loaded with coals for Plymouth, and, as it happened, the tide served for leaving at eleven o’clock at night, so I arranged to haul out at that time, for the wind was fair, and there was nothing to wait for. The loading was finished early in the afternoon, and when the hatches were battened down, decks cleared up, and everything seen ready for sailing, my crew went ashore—there were four of them and a boy, Bill Adams ; so as they were going up

the ladder I sang out to them not to be later than half-past ten—it was then nearly six.

“‘What for?’ said one.

“‘What for! why, because we’re going to sea by to-night’s tide.’

“‘Why not wait for morning and make a daylight job of it?’ queried another.

“Well, it was quite a new thing to me, at any rate, to have my orders commented upon in this manner; so I simply said—pretty sharply too, I dare say—‘See that you are here at half-past ten,’ and with that I turned away, and the men went off up the quay. I heard them laughing as they slouched along, and once, happening to look, I saw one of them turn round and grin right to my face.

“In about an hour the boy Bill came back aboard, and I got him to boil the kettle and make me a cup of tea, which he brought to me where I was sitting on the little quarter-deck.

“‘Well, Bill, what is it?’ said I, seeing that he was fidgiting about as though he had something to say and didn’t know how to begin.

“‘They zay they bain’t coming back till pas’ tide-time, sur.’

“‘The devil they aren’t!’ replied I; ‘where are they now?’

“‘They’m in Patsey Durrant’s beershop, sur—the “Snake and Pickaxe”—up there by the church; don’t you zay *I* told ’ee where they’m to.’

“‘Oh!’ said I, laughing, ‘I’m not going to bother my-

self about them ; if they don't show up in time I shall go without them, and you and I will take the schooner back.'

" 'Mercy 'pon us ! you doant mayn that there, sur.'

" 'Yes, I do "mayn that there,"' replied I, smiling at the boy's terrified expression ; 'and now make me another cup of tea, and don't let the galley fire go out.'

"Well, half-past ten came, and as no crew arrived, Bill and I cast off the lines and hauled the *Mermaid* out to the dock gates, and when they were opened the tug-boat took our hawser and off we went.

"The wind was northerly, just a nice gentle breeze, and the sky was perfectly clear and cloudless ; against it the towering Welsh mountains stretched, black and indistinct, away to the eastward, until their ragged outline faded and was lost in the gauzy light of the newly-risen moon, which hung calm and serene over the wooded shore on the other side of the Severn, sending her silvery beams streaming across the tranquil water in a long trembling streak of glittering brightness.

"While we were towing out I got the foretop-sail loosed and sheeted home, and the staysail and jib hoisted ; afterwards I put a couple of reefs in the main-sail and one in the foresail.

"I had told the captain of the tug how I was fixed before we left the docks, and when we were far enough out he—instead of letting go the end of the rope and heaving it overboard, as is generally the way with tug-boat men—very kindly slowed up, so I was able to haul the line aboard without much trouble. And not satisfied with that, he came alongside and sent four of his hands to

pull the sails up for me, for which service I was precious grateful ; and then, when everything I wanted was set, he wished me a pleasant passage and sheered off.

“ ‘ Now, Bill,’ said I, ‘ you are the port watch and I am the starboard watch ; we’ll keep all hands on deck until we are clear of the Point, and then you can go below. Is the galley fire burning ?’

“ ‘ Very well, make up a good fire and put the kettle on.’

“ ‘ The kittle is on, sur, and boiling ; will ’ee have a cup o’ tay now if I make en ?’

“ ‘ Yes, but be quick over it ; I shall want you before long.’

“ We soon ran out clear of Penarth Point, and then, having hauled aft the sheets and braced up the yards, I steered away to the west’ard, and sent the port watch below ; not to the forecastle, though—I made the boy bring his bed aft into the cabin, so that I could easily give him a call if I wanted him.

“ The skylight was open, and I was very much amused to hear the lad talking to himself as he was arranging his bed ; for being right underneath where I stood, his voice was quite audible. ‘ Ay, ay,’ muttered he, ‘ he’s mazed, sure nuff—iss fy—mazed as th’ ole granfer, Joe. My ! I dessay he’d hayve me overboard soon as look, if I was for tell ’un he’d best go to ’Combe or somewhere’s to ship two or dree hands.—*I* baint such a bittle-head as to spake.—Well, I can’t help it.’ Then raising his voice, and peering up through the skylight—‘ When be gwain to call me, sur ?’

“ ‘ Not until four o’clock.’

“ ‘Aw—thanky, sur. Good-night, sur.’

“As the schooner drew out from the land she felt the full force of the wind, which had freshened a little, sending her skimming quietly and steadily along, about six knots through the water.

“I called the boy at four o’clock, just as the sky to the east’ard was getting gay with the radiance of the early dawn ; and, giving him the wheel, I wrapped myself up in a couple of rugs and lay down on the deck for an hour or two’s rest.

“The wind freshened during the day, and soon after passing Lundy Island it was blowing a hard breeze which made the little *Mermaid* tear along over the rising sea in splendid style, and so by evening we were somewhere abreast of St. Ives Bay.

“The sun went down in a bank of ragged-looking clouds, and as the sky looked wild and threatening, I clewed up the foretop-sail and stowed it, and close-reefed the mainsail before night came in.

“The wind still held northerly, though I could see that it wouldn’t be so long, for the storm-clouds were hurrying up from the south-west, and spreading themselves across the sky until, presently, not a single star was visible. Sure enough, just as the daylight faded, the wind suddenly dropped, and then after a few minutes a damp air stole up, right ahead, so we hauled aft the sheets and stood off from the land. Soon after, the wind came sweeping along in ever-increasing gusts, and a head-sea began to heave up that made the schooner plunge and stagger as she dipped her nose into the surges.

“‘This won’t do,’ thought I, ‘we must have the jib and foresail off her while we are able to muzzle the canvas;’ so I sang out to the boy to get the staysail sheet to windward, and as I was then able to leave the wheel, the both of us lowered the foresail and made it fast, and then we went and hauled down the jib and stowed that as well.

“Just as I had made the gasket fast, a heavy sea came rolling along, and up went the schooner’s bows until her bowsprit was very nearly perpendicular; as she swooped down I saw she was going to bury us, and I only had time to yell, ‘Hold on, boy!’ before the foaming water was over my head.

“Minutes seemed to pass as I clung to the bowsprit, and then the wave rolled by, and I was able to breathe again; but the boy was gone! swept away by the fierce strength of the rushing sea.

“Almost maddened with grief, I clambered in off the bowsprit and rushed to the weather bulwarks; there was the boy, not half-a-dozen yards off, though the distance was increasing rapidly as the schooner sagged away to leeward. A glance was enough; the poor fellow saw me and stretched out his arms for assistance, so I waved my hand to bid him keep his heart up, and dashed to where the jib down-haul was belayed, seized it, stuck a bowline in the end, rove my arm through it, jumped on the rail, and plunged overboard.

“I reached the boy, though the line tightened as I grabbed him by the shoulder; and, the schooner forging ahead a little, we were drawn alongside just abreast of

the main rigging. At the same moment a sea came tumbling along and hove us up very nearly level with the lower dead-eyes, and so we both managed to grasp the lanyards, and scramble aboard before the next wave thundered past.

"At midnight there was a howling gale of wind blowing, and a cold, driving rain flying up in sheets before the sweeping blasts, making it difficult to see more than a few hundred yards in any direction. The little *Mermaid*, though, under her close-reefed mainsail and forestay-sail with the sheet amidships, rode easily and well over the wild seas.

"Thus the night passed slowly by, until at last the pale, sickly light of morning stole gradually around. Then the rain ceased, and the clouds parted and broke up into heavy rolling banks of greyish-yellow vapour; the wind moderated, the sun shone gaily out, lighting the wild scene, and—and—well, we scandalized the mainsail and wore ship."

"Pway what is 'scandalizing the mainsail'?" asked Billy Looney.

"Tricing the tack up and lowering the peak, so as to gybe the sail easily," replied the skipper; and as Billy Looney said, "Oh, ah, I see," there is no doubt he perfectly understood.

"Well, we got her to the wind on the other tack without mishap, and hove the main peak up again, with the winch, and set the jib. I let her go through the water then, and so by breakfast time we sighted the Seven Stones, when I bore up and made a fair wind of it.

"How that little vessel drove along to be sure! for there was still a heavy sea running, and sometimes a larger wave than usual would catch her up like a cork and send her ranging along with a smother of whirling foam high above her rail; then, as it went roaring and tumbling ahead, she would settle quietly down in the hollow, and almost seem to stop dead for a few moments until another wave came thundering along, and then off she would dash again.

"It wasn't long, with that breeze, before we passed the Lizard, and so, in due course, the little schooner got safely inside Plymouth breakwater; much to my relief, I can tell you.

"I ran her along, past Drake's Island, and at the entrance to the Catwater I put the helm hard down, and lent Bill a hand to haul down the staysail; then, as she came up head to wind, I let go the anchor.

"'Well, Bill,' said I, 'aren't you glad we're back safe and sound?'

"'Ay, sur, that I be; I didn't think us should ever zee the dear old Mount Edgumbe no more—that time when all hands was overboard.'

"Well, the Brothers came off in a shore-boat shortly after, when, of course, I had to explain matters; and they, though they blamed me somewhat for risking the schooner, thought fit on the whole—seeing that, after all, I certainly had brought her safely into port—to commend my conduct; and, further, they offered me the command of a new ship they had just had built—the *Firefly*—a handsome little full-rigged ship of about five hun-

dred tons, as I think I told you before. She was then loading for Calcutta, and I gladly accepted the offer, and went captain of her for, I think, four voyages. I took the boy Bill with me and made a man of him, and when I left the firm to go back to my old London employ, he was second mate of the *Firefly*, and, I believe, in time he got to command her."

Just then seven bells struck, and I was on the point of taking my departure to fetch our dinner from the galley, when the captain very graciously and kindly invited Baby and me to dine in the cabin, which, being a most delightful prospect, was accepted with much pleasure.

However, I had to go all the same to get the allowance for our mess.

"There," said I, to Edwards, placing a kid of stewed preserved meat and another containing duff on a chest, "you can have a good square meal to-day, for Baby and I are to dine in the cabin."

"Hear that, Featherstone?"

"What?"

"Those two anointed humbugs have soft-sawdered the old man, and they're to dine in the cabin if you please!"

"They'd wheedle the leg off an iron pot," remarked Featherstone, turning out of his bunk.

"I wish we were all four invited," said I, earnestly.

"None of your blarney here, you artful little midge; we aren't going to hoist that in, are we, Featherstone?"

"Not much," replied he; "so clear out and give us room, for I'm hungry."

"It's your wheel at two o'clock, isn't it, Edwards?" said I, as I was leaving the berth, "I'll take your trick if you like."

"Oh, then you probably fancy you can steer the ship full and bye, eh?—No, never mind, sonny, I'd sooner you didn't; thanks, though, for volunteering. Don't forget to give me a call at four bells, for I shall very likely have a nap after dinner."





CHAPTER X.

LIGHT LITERATURE.

THE SHIP'S "LIBRARY"—JACK'S OPINION—DICK TURPIN—GOOD
ADVICE.

I SN'T it a treat to have one's food in a civilized manner?" said Baby, as we arrived on deck after a sumptuous repast in the cabin. "To have a napkin, and glasses to drink from, and clean knives and forks, and be waited on! I like those things quite as much as the grub, though after pork and peasoup, with peasoup and pork for a change, the tarts and things went 'high,' as Featherstone calls it. Did you eat a lot?—I did."

"Yes; I couldn't help it either. I hope they won't think us greedy," said I. "Old Billy Looney quite stared to see the way I pitched into the things. I don't think I should care to go up and stow the main-skysail just now."

"What's that?" asked the mate, who, following us, had heard my concluding remark. "Why you're like

the darkey who remarked that 'No dinnah—no work! Good dinnah—go to sleep.' Fetch my pipe."

"Ax your pardon, sir," said Jack Gudgeon to Mr. Harvey, as I came back with the pipe, "but I've come to arst you if I can have a book; steward says there's a libery aboard."

"Well," laughed the mate, "there certainly is a box of books down below with 'Ship's Library' painted on the lid; you can have a rub at it if you like. Go down and ask the steward to let you have it; and bring the box up so that anybody else that likes can have a book."

"I've just been turning out that same box," said Mr. Harvey, when Gudgeon had gone, "and here is a catalogue of the books; it's rather amusing; listen—'Sir Robert Peel and his Era'—'The Life of Christ'—'Somebody's Sermons'—'New Testament with copious notes'—'A bundle of tracts'—'The Young Man from Home'—'The Mirage of Life'—Three volumes of the 'Evangelical Magazine'—'Wardlaw on Miracles' and the 'Ministry of Reconciliation.'"

"Some worm-eaten society ashore is responsible for placing these highly interesting works in the ship, and no doubt they hold sanctimonious meetings and talk of the great good they do. The catalogue is dated five years ago, I see, and not one of the books has been so much as cut yet. As far as I am concerned they may as well be thrown overboard."

"If people want to amuse sailors let them send a selection of works by Dickens, Scott, or any of our standard authors, and sailors will thank them; but

Jack won't stand having religion rammed down his throat.

"A sailor hasn't much time for reading, and at all events it isn't with the 'Ministry of Reconciliation' that he'll while away an hour or so, he'd sooner go to sleep.

"Here comes Gudgeon; let's hear what he has to say."

"This here library palls me, sir, and regular kills my pig," said Jack, planting the box down on the poop ladder.

"I've had a look at the books, but blest if *I* can make out what they'm wrote about! I gets brought up all standing every two or three words through falling acrost one as I can't make head nor tail on. Some words is 'most as long as our flying-jib-downhaul, and all o's and hex's; and as none of the books has got pictures—why I reckon I'll let them sweat."

"But surely you would like to know what Mr. Wardlaw has to say on the subject of miracles?" said the mate.

"Perhaps I might, and perhaps I mightn't," replied Jack, seeing that Mr. Harvey was taking a rise out of him; "but if Mister Wardrobe, or what his name is, could persuade us chaps to read his book, he'd work a miracle as would sail right round any he's ever heard of—I'll lay a plug of tobacco."

"I'll lend you some books, Jack, that I think you'll like, perhaps better than any in the box," said I; and with that I went and fetched a pile of weekly numbers of a very high-class work called "Dick Turpin, or the

Knights of the Road," which had been surreptitiously presented to me as a parting gift by our old cook, who revelled in this description of literature.

She had roughly stitched them together in brown-paper covers, about a dozen numbers at a time ; I dare say she found them more convenient this way for reading in bed. (Wouldn't the governor have made a fuss if he had known her tricks and manners !)

The first page Jack looked at contained a more or less faithful representation of Black Bess, with Dick Turpin on her back, flying over a gate—apparently some fifteen feet high—while a score or so of police-officers were scurrying in all directions to avoid the deadly aim of the renowned Dick, who held an enormous pistol in each hand.

"That's more like it !" exclaimed Jack, in great glee.

"I allow this book would knock Mister Tarr'drope and his miracles into a cocked hat ; not but what his book may be mighty clever for them as understands the lay of the land—people as pulls bow-oars in the Sunday schools, and the likes of them—but it ain't suitable for men like me, anyhow.

"Much obliged, Tommy ; I'll take great care of your books. Can the others have a squint at them ?"

"Certainly, Jack," said I ; and with that off he went and distributed the adventures of Dick Turpin amongst those of the crew who were sitting about on the spars and elsewhere—much to their delight, if one might judge by the laughter and occasionally animated conversations which presently followed the serving out of the pages,

and which were plainly audible where the mate and I were standing.

These numbers of "Dick Turpin, or the Knights of the Road," are a source of great amusement to the crew; and besides the mere perusal of the thrilling adventures contained in the book, the men manage to extract almost endless fun from its pages, with that aptitude for skylarking so common among seamen. For instance, before many hours had passed the whole of their former nicknames were abandoned and a fresh set was obtained from my book, all the names of the prominent characters in it being distributed among the crew. So we have Claude Duval, Sixteen-string-Jack, and all the rest of them about the ship's decks, answering to those names and refusing to acknowledge any others—amongst themselves, of course. It takes but a very little to amuse sailors.

Surely, surely it is well to brighten by any means the dull monotony of a ship's fore-castle; to cause the men to think of *anything* beyond the drudgery of their daily lives—their hardships, their privations. Good, excellent, well-meaning people, pray remember this, and don't send sailors goody-goody trash which they won't read, and ponderous theological tomes which they can't understand.

Note.—I didn't write this.—T. D.

(P.S.—It is true, though.)



CHAPTER XI.

THE LAST OF THE "TRADES."

SETTING UP RIGGING—A YOUNG HERCULES—ONE GOOD TURN
DESERVES ANOTHER.

THE trades are almost done," I heard Mr. Harvey say to the second mate one night—a few days after we passed Trinadada—as our watch was being relieved at twelve o'clock. "The wind has been very light since four bells, though there's a little more now. By the look of the sky I expect we shall have a flat calm as soon as the sun rises; for that stuff over there," continued he, pointing to a light bank of clouds away to the eastward, "hasn't risen anything for the last hour. I should like to see a calm day to-morrow, as I'm going to set the rigging up; it wants it bad enough."

"That's true," replied Mr. Locke. "I suppose it will be all hands on deck in the afternoon watch?"

"Yes, and the next day as well; there's the rigging for one thing and the new suit of sails to bend for

another ; that will keep the ' say-boys ' busy for a couple of days—perhaps three. It depends on the weather."

Mr. Harvey's forecast proved true, and when we came on deck at four o'clock there was not a breath of wind.

"Go to the galley and tell the cook to hurry up with his coffee. I want to turn to as soon as I can this morning," said the mate to me almost directly after we had relieved the other watch ; and, not satisfied with sending me off with this message, he came himself, just as I had delivered it, and the cook was beginning to growl and grumble out some ill-conditioned reply—which he soon checked, though, on hearing the mate's voice.

"Now, Doctor ! get this coffee under way as quick as you can ; look slippy, and see if you can't let us have it in half an hour's time." Then to me, "Go and drum up all the grease and tar pots, and see they're filled ; get the spikes and heavers out of the boatswain's locker, and a couple of balls of spunyarn, and set them all on the fore-hatch."

"Who's that ?" asked Edwards, who was on the look-out, as I was rummaging about for the spikes and things.

"Oh ' Me,' is it ? and pray what is ' Me ' doing there ?"

"I'm finding grease and tar pots for the mate."

"What does the mate want with grease and tar at this unearthly hour, you thing ?"

"Oh ! Going to set up rigging ! Then we sha'n't be able to see him for smoke as soon as the coffee has been served out. I know !—nigger-driving will be a fool to it.

"It's good daylight now, so I shall relieve myself from the look-out and go aft to buckle on my armour

for the coming fray. Bring the coffee as soon as you can, for there won't be much time allowed this morning."

This was quite true; for, before I had half finished mine, Mr. Harvey came bustling along, roaring, "Turn to!—Edwards, you and the boy jump down into the forepeak and get up the tackles for setting up rigging." Then off he went for'ard, shouting, "Never mind the decks this morning! Covers off the lanyards of the fore-rigging!" and so on.

I was so glad when eight o'clock came, for it had been nothing but "Boy here," "Boy there," "Boy fetch this," or "Boy hold on to that," the whole time.

"I am so tired," said I at breakfast time, putting down our two hook-pots of tea which I had just fetched from the galley, and seating myself on a chest.

"Tired!" exclaimed Edwards; "and pray what have you done to fatigue yourself? As far as I could see, you did nothing but loaf about all the morning. If you'd been heaving round the winch like I have, you might perhaps feel a little weary. Fact is, you're getting fat and lazy, what with too much high-living and too little work; and if I were the mate you shouldn't have a watch below in the daytime for a week."

"Then I'm very glad you aren't the mate," said I.

"Oh! you are, eh? That's impertinence, and shows a mutinous spirit which must be immediately quelled. Come here! Come!—if I have to fetch you, the punishment will be greater."

"Mercy, kind sir!" exclaimed I, though I could hardly speak for laughing, and of course I knew he

was only joking. "You should have allowed me to finish what I was saying when you interrupted me; I was going to tell you that I wished you were the captain—which is better than being the mate, isn't it?"

Edwards couldn't object to this, of course, though he laughed and said I was as artful as a waggon-load of monkeys; so the rest of our breakfast was got through without any disturbance of the peace.

What a splendid fellow you are, thought I, looking up, from my job of clearing away the remnants of our meal, at Edwards, who had just taken off the dirty shirt in which he had been working, in order to put on a clean one before turning in. No wonder we all know when you come to give us a drag, with those arms, I mentally remarked, surveying with admiration the huge development of his muscles and the great depth of his chest. His shoulders weren't so wide across as the mate's, but then Edwards was much taller, very nearly as tall, in fact, as the boatswain, who, though about six feet two, was of wiry, sinewy build, and thin as a lath.

So if you can imagine a young giant about twenty years old, forty-nine inches round the chest, with a handsome good-natured face and dark curly hair, you will have a very good idea of Edwards as I then saw him.

About a week ago, several of the men of our watch were getting a cask of beef and another of pork up out of the fore-hatch with the aid of a tackle. And, somehow or another, they began to talk of feats of strength, and of what they had lifted or had known others to do.

"Never mind what you have done, or what you've

seed others do," said Barrett; "can anybody lift one of them casks off the deck and set it on his knee?"

"Well, you can't, anyhow," replied Rocky.

"I don't know so much about that; I'm pretty strong, though there ain't much of me. Don't fancy as you big chaps have got all the strength."

"Well, let's try," said Gudgeon, laying hold of one of the casks—which, however, he failed to lift more than a foot off the deck.

And then the others tried with no better success, all but Barrett, who, greatly to my surprise, actually lifted it as high as his thighs.

"There," said he, "I'm best man so far. You have a try, Edwards; don't be beat by a little man like me—though, 'pon my word," said Barrett, as though an idea of Edwards' possessing any more than average strength had never occurred to him before, "I fancy somehow you can lick me easy."

"Well, I'll try," remarked Edwards, laughing. "I don't suppose it is a very great weight, after all;" and with that he caught hold of the cask, and, raising it as though it were quite empty, put it right up on the top-gallant forecastle!

"What is that cask doing up there?" asked the mate, who happened to come along just then.

"I put it there, sir," said Edwards, "to show that it wasn't very heavy." And so saying, he took it off the forecastle and set it down on deck; and did it so easily, and without any apparent exertion, that the cask seemed to weigh nothing whatever.

“But it isn’t full!” exclaimed Mr. Harvey.

“Yes, I think it is, sir,” replied Edwards, modestly.

The mate looked at him, and, without saying another word, went up to the cask and caught hold of it, evidently expecting to find little or no resistance; but, though he struggled hard, he only managed to raise it as high as his breast.

“Well!” he cried, putting it down, “you’re the first man that has beaten me at lifting since I’ve been a man! Let me see you put it up again, for ’pon my word I can scarcely believe my own eyes.”

So Edwards took up the cask and set it once more on the topgallant forecastle, and then took it down again; but this time, instead of placing it on the deck, he walked off with it and carried it aft to the foot of the mainmast, where the harness casks are, and there he deposited it, all ready for opening.

You may depend upon it that nobody boasts of his powers of lifting after this—at all events if Edwards is about. Not that he ever brags or refers to his strength in any way—he is far too bashful and unassuming for that; and indeed on this occasion, when the mate complimented him on the Herculean powers he had displayed, old Edwards blushed like a great girl.

“Any washing this morning, Tommy?” said Jack Gudgeon, looking in just as I had cleared away the remains of our breakfast and swept up the floor of the berth. “I’m going to daub out a few pieces of my own, so let’s have what there is of your’n, and I’ll make one job of it.”

For since I made him a present of the bedding, Jack

insists on keeping my wardrobe clean and in good order. And I must also tell you that he has gone to the trouble of making me a blue serge suit, like those the sailors in the navy wear, with a great flapping collar which reaches half-way down my back, and is very inconvenient whenever there is any wind ; and a round blue cloth cap, with a black ribbon, on which " Albatross " is worked in yellow silk. These, with a nice white knife-lanyard, a perfect maze of intricate knots and complicated sennit, completed the " rig," as Jack called it ; and when he had shown me how to put it on properly, he pronounced the result to be highly satisfactory, remarking that it was a " fust-rate lash up," and that I looked a " regular double-breasted, hairy-chested British seaman."

" Now I suppose you want a similar fit-out ? " said Jack to Baby, who had been present during the ceremony, and evidently envied me the possession of my new raiment. " Let's take your measure, then ; I suppose there ain't much difference in you two—about twelve round the waist and sixteen round the chest."

" Don't be absurd, Jack," said I, loftily.

However, it ended in a similar suit being made for Baby, much to his delight.

" Come in and sit down, Jack," said Edwards, while I was collecting my dirty clothes.

" Tommy has been telling me how you have been washing and mending his clothes, and so forth, and that you have refused to take any payment " (which was quite true). " So we've been talking about you, and the long and short of it is he wants to teach you navigation,

which he's well able to do—having been in the *Worcester*—at all events until you get well on with it. And if you like to go up for a second-mate's ticket when the ship gets back to London, I believe, from what I know of you, that you'll be sure to pass the examination. Tommy didn't like to mention this to you himself, so I have spoken for him."

"Well," said Jack, as I was about to speak, "I don't want no payment for just washing a few shirts and things, because there's nothing me nor any of the chaps for'ard wouldn't do, as lies in our power, for the two boys, which the pair of them is continual on the look-out to obligate us.

"I wish I knowed how to say what I mean," said Jack, twirling his cap round and round; "but not having the gift of the gab I ain't able to, therefore I'll say no more. But as for this here navigation—why, I'd be very thankful for being showed the way to do it, as I've often thought of larning, but never could get the hang of it, as I might say, through not having had much schooling to speak of."

"Oh, it's easy enough, as you'll soon find out," replied Edwards. "I'll lend you a 'Norie;' lift up the lid of my chest, and you'll find it under the till. And now I'll leave you in the hands of your tutor."

So I showed Jack how far to read for his first lesson, and told him to be sure to make a note of anything he didn't understand, and arranged when he was to come for instruction, and then he took the "Norie" and my bundle of dirty clothes and went off.



CHAPTER XII.

MAN OVERBOARD.

LAUNCHING THE BOAT—BILLY LOONEY TO THE RESCUE—WHAT THE
CAPE PIGEON SAID—BENDING SAILS.

THAT night, when we went below at eight o'clock, the ship was slipping along through the almost motionless water, with a faint dew-laden breeze on the starboard quarter, which had sprung up as the sun went down.

Edwards and I had but just turned in, and neither of us was asleep, when we heard a sharp cry of "Man overboard!" followed by the sound of rushing footsteps on the poop.

There was a terrible scene of confusion when we got on deck, some running one way and some another; but Mr. Harvey's voice soon brought everybody to their senses, as he shouted out his orders in rapid succession; and the first excitement being over, our watch braced the head-yards sharp up, and the others set to work to launch the port gig, which was kept, like the other boats, securely lashed down, bottom upwards on the skids.

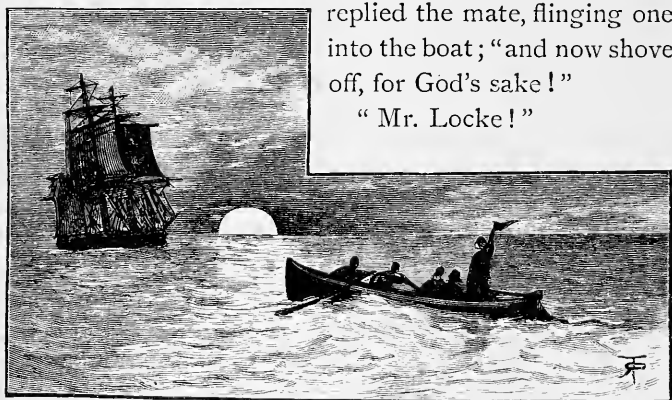
What a time it seemed to me—though very likely it only took a few minutes—before the boat was part launched, part thrown over the side, and those who were nearest scrambled in, while the oars were flung in after them.

“Give us something for a plug!” shouted Barrett, who was one of the boat’s crew.

“Take this belaying-pin and ram it in the hole!”

replied the mate, flinging one into the boat; “and now shove off, for God’s sake!”

“Mr. Locke!”



RESCUED.

“Sir.”

“Pull away out on the weather-quarter. I’ll burn blue lights, one on the fore-castle-head and one right aft, until you come back.”

“Ay, ay, sir! Give way, men!”

“Tell me, for Heaven’s sake, who is overboard?” I heard the captain ask in an agitated voice of the man who was at the wheel.

“The poor little boy—Baby, sir—and somebody jumped in after him; I dunno I’m sure who it was.”

My heart almost stopped when I heard this, and I felt quite stunned and dazed with horror.

I have a very indistinct notion of what took place for the next few minutes, though that weird scene, as the glare of the blue lights shone on the set features of the crew, who were gazing fixedly in the direction the boat had taken, will be for ever imprinted on my memory.

Oh, what a time it seemed before we heard the faint sound of oars in the distance, and shortly afterwards saw the boat come dashing out of the wall of darkness which seemed to hedge in the ship beyond the space illuminated by the blue lights.

"Have you found them, Mr. Locke?" shouted the captain.

"Yes, sir ; thank God, I've got them both !"

Oh, how we cheered, and went almost mad with joy—at least I did for one, very likely the others weren't so excited ; and then alongside came the boat with a bang and a rattle, as the oars were thrown down on her thwarts, and poor Baby was passed over the side by many willing hands, and instantly conveyed, by the doctor's orders, down into the cabin.

The second mate was the next to appear, and, in answer to many anxious inquiries, he told us that the boy was all right when he was picked up, and that he'd only fainted as they were rowing back.

Then another dripping form clambered over the ship's side, and was assisted to gain the deck.

"I'm all wight, thank you, only I should weally like a little bwandy."

It was Billy Looney—dear old Billy Looney !—then, who had jumped overboard after Charlie !

How the men shook hands with him, and crowded round him volunteering their support as he walked aft to the companion—which he was quite able to do without assistance, though he wasn't permitted to go alone for a single step all the way.

"There, that will do," sang out the mate. "All's well that ends well ! Hook on the boat !"

"I didn't never think it laid in old Billy to jump overboard after anybody—did you, Tom ?" remarked Barrett to one of the other watch, after the ship had been got on her course again.

"That I didn't ; he's about the last man in the ship I should have put down in the list for bundlin' over the side on that there job."

"He was digging out like a steam-engine, with the boy under his arm, when we catched sight of them from the boat," rejoined Barrett ; "and the first thing he said arter we'd dragged them both out of the water was, 'What an outwageously long time you have been, to be sure !' "

Charlie was all right the next morning, and none the worse for his ducking ; and when we came on deck after breakfast, he was polishing away at the brass-work—which wasn't quite finished—for dear life, so as to lose as little of his watch below as possible.

There had been a slight breeze all the night, but as soon as the sun rose it left us, and the ship was again lying becalmed.

Nothing could have been more favourable for the work we had in hand, which was to unbend the sails and bend a new suit ; and, the other watch having got all the new sails up on deck, we commenced at once.

Barrett and I went up to unbend the foretop-gallant-sail, and while we were perched on the opposite yard-arms casting the earings adrift, I happened to notice a peculiar-looking bird of a sort I hadn't seen before.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Barrett, just as I was about to call his attention to the strange bird. "Here's the fust one, then! What is it? Why, it's a Cape pigeon, come to give us notice that they're looking out for us down to the south'ard, and getting of it ready for us by the time we gets there. He says to me, plain as tongue can speak, 'Jack Barrett, overhaul your oil-skins, and give your sea-boots a coat of tar and grease, and turn to and mend that hole in your monkey-jacket, for you'll want them articles before so very long.' That's what the Cape pigeon is saying to me.

"Got that earing adrift? That's you, then ; bring the end in and make it fast round the buntline. Now go down on deck—your number's flying, I can see."

"Here, catch hold of the end of this," said Mr. Harvey, when I lighted out of the fore-rigging. "Unlay one strand—I'll unlay from the other end, and see if we shall be shipmates again."

"I hope so, sir."

"Do you, though? well, that's odd. Anyhow, we shall be, that's quite clear," said he, as the strand, which we had both happened to get hold of, fell on the deck.

“Now unlay the others, and cut them up in lengths—so long—and then open out the yarns ; they’re for the new rovings.

“No, I don’t mean ‘robands,’ sir,” said the mate, mimicking me ; “we don’t understand any of your d—d Navy lingo here. When you’ve got the yarns ready, take them up on the fore-topsail-yard, and lend a hand to bend the sail. Do you know how to pass a roving ?

“Well, I’ll tell you. Take three yarns—so ; pass the ends under the jackstay—up through the eyelet-hole—then under the jackstay and up through again ; pass as many turns that way as you can, hauling each one well taut, and then knot the ends together with a reef knot. Now, up you go.”

It was our turn to-day to lose the afternoon watch below, and after dinner all hands were busily at work : bending on the gear and sending the new sails aloft ; making up the old ones, and stowing them away in the sail locker, and so on.

It was all done, though, long before four o’clock, and the rest of the time was utilized in finishing the rigging, seizing off the lanyards and putting on the chafing gear.

At eight bells the very welcome order to “Clear the decks up” was given by the mate, and we boys swept up all the rope-yarns, or shakings as they are called, and put away the odds and ends that were lying about.



CHAPTER XIII.

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS.

GREASING DOWN—HANDS SHORTEN SAIL—THE DUTCHMAN—OFF THE CAPE—WRECK OF SEA-VIEW COTTAGE—RUNNING DOWN EASTING.

I THINK greasing down is the very worst of all. Polishing brass-work and cleaning out that horrible longboat are bad enough, goodness knows ; but for all that, I'd sooner do either than grease down our main royal and skysail masts. There's simply nothing to hold on to ; and though the mate is always very careful to impress upon my memory that one hand is for the owners and the other for myself, I can't keep the grease from getting over both. We boys have to grease all the masts down once a week—on Fridays.

The one whose turn it is gets a tin pot nearly full of slush, which he hangs round his neck by a spunyarn lanyard ; with this and a wad of oakum he has to clamber aloft and well grease the parts of the masts up and down which the yards slide, commencing at the

very top and working down. If the ship happens to be rolling at all it is mighty inconvenient, I can tell you, especially above the topgallant-yard, where there is no rigging to speak of.

I've had several narrow squeaks of coming down by the run, through getting both my hands greasy.

The second time I went up on this errand has been the nearest shave so far. I'd finished the main skysail-mast, and in getting down past the eyes of the royal backstays I laid hold of one of them with my left hand, which I didn't know was smothered in grease. The next second I was off like a flash of lightning down the backstay, to which I was fortunately able to cling—though, both hands being greasy, I couldn't stop myself in the least, and in another moment I brought up—bang—on the spreader that sticks out from the topmast-crosstrees.

My pot capsized, and all the grease went shooting away to leeward—though a very little, about a tablespoonful, I should think, struck the upper topsail close to the clew. I may thank my lucky stars there was no more.

“What the —— are you about there, heaving grease into the sails!” roared the mate, who had seen my rapid descent and its result.

I couldn't answer him for a little while, for all the sense was fairly frightened out of me.

“D'ye hear there! what are you doing, sitting on that spreader? Out on the lower topsail-yard and lick that grease up!”

“You couldn’t help it! I’ll show you how to help it next time, then! Wait until I get you down on deck!”

Two or three days after the new sails were bent we got a splendid breeze from about north-west, which was of course fair, about a couple of points on the port quarter. It increased towards mid-day, and just after eight bells the main-skysail was clewed up. I went up and stowed it, and afterwards I sent the yard down, all by myself, having been ordered to do so by Mr. Harvey.

He questioned me first to see if I really did know how to do it. The yard came down without a hitch, and I was very proud to hear the mate say—when I got back on deck—that I had done the job very well indeed, and that Lord Nelson himself couldn’t have managed better; following up this remark by observing that I should be a man before my mother now.

This breeze carried us along famously for a day or so, and then it died away, leaving the ship plunging about in a heavy swell that came rolling up from the westward. It began to rain in perfect torrents shortly after the wind fell light, and as what little there was kept baffling about, first on one side and then on another, there was no rest for the watch on deck.

The rain came on so suddenly too, that, before we had time to get our oilskins, everybody was soaked through to the skin.

Jolly glad was I when eight bells came. I’d been watching the clock like a cat watching a mouse, and struck the bell to a second. The rain ceased long before our watch below came to an end, and when

evening drew in the sky had cleared overhead, though the light from the setting sun struggled through heavy banks of vapour, wreathed in many fantastic shapes, which quite obscured his disc from our sight.

The sky to the westward looked very wild and threatening, "full of wind," as I heard the captain say as he glanced anxiously at the sullen, angry clouds that appeared settling down upon the surface of the ocean, while their higher edges were torn and ragged as though battling to restrain a tempest from breaking out of their sombre bosoms.

One gleam of lurid light streamed out from the sun as he disappeared behind the heaving waters, throwing the scene into brilliant relief for a moment, and then the darkness deepened rapidly, and the hollow moan of the distant wind sounded ominously in our ears.

"Hands shorten sail, Mr. Harvey!" exclaimed the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Hands shorten sail!" soon resounded all over the ship, and as there was no wind then we very soon took everything off her but the topsails, the foresail, and the foretopmast-staysail.

"Stand by the topsail-halliards!"

Scarcely had this order been given when the wind drove down upon us, accompanied by a driving, hissing sheet of hail and bitter rain.

"LET GO!" Down came our topsail-yards, as the ship, struck by the mighty mass of rushing atmosphere, fairly buried her bows for an instant; then, rising and

shaking herself clear of the water, she set off at a terrific pace, driving almost dead before the wind.

We did not feel its force so much when the ship had gathered her full speed, and before long we got the order to hoist the upper topsails and loose the jib. When these sails were set the *Albatross* fairly flew, with her lee rail (for the wind had been brought a couple of points or so on the starboard quarter) trailing in the seething foam whenever a huge wave came rolling by, perhaps to break in an avalanche of roaring turmoil right under our bows.

Thus we drove on all night, and as soon as morning broke we set the main-topgallant-sail and dragged aft the main-sheet, keeping the weather clew hauled up.

"The old man means making a passage, I can see," said Gudgeon, as he belayed the main-sheet and leisurely coiled the end up on the bitts.

"Oh," said Edwards, "this is nothing; wait until we're homeward bound with the tea, you'll see some cracking on then—especially if we race home with some other ship, as we're pretty sure to."

"I reckon she'd go quite as fast now with the mainsail stowed and a couple of reefs in the topsails; she's only dragging through the water and stopping a good deal of her way," rejoined Gudgeon.

Just then a sail was reported, right ahead; and of course we all went to look, for not a single ship had we seen for nearly a month.

The stranger was steering about the same course as ourselves, but for all that we came flying up to her as

though she had been at anchor. We made her out to be a very large, square-sterned, full-rigged ship—Dutch, most of the crew pronounced her to be—and she was taking matters very easily, with nothing set but her lower fore and main topsails and foretopmast-staysail, under which canvas she was wallowing along in a perfect smother of foam, and rolling her lower yard-arms almost into the water.

We went past her like a racehorse past a post, though as the *Albatross* went tearing by Mynheer loosed and set his foresail—just to show us he was not asleep, I suppose.

"I was in just such another old bucket, once," said Mr. Harvey to me when I got on the poop, and glancing at the Dutchman, whom we were rapidly leaving astern.

"Her name was the *Jane Anderson*, of Glasgow. You'd think by the fuss she made when she was going four knots that she was reeling off a good dozen ; everything fore and aft smothered with foam, and leaving a wake astern fifty yards wide. As for going to windward, why Noah's ark or a bathing-machine would sail her out of sight. North-east on one tack, south-west on the other, was about our mark.

"One day, after we'd been at sea a fortnight or so on the first voyage I made in her—it was blowing pretty heavy too at the time—the old packet was ploughing along, just like that chap astern is now, only I'd got single-reefed topsails on her with the main-topgallant-sail set over. Every now and again a sea would come along and heave her old stern up, and as it ran ahead

she'd stick her nose down into it and churn up such oceans of spray that it seemed as though she was worrying the wave in her teeth.

"By-and-by the old man came running up on deck, and aft he dashed to where I was standing, by the wheel.

" ' Good God ! Mr. Harvey, what are you doing with the ship ? You'll have her running away with you ! Heave the log ! ' said he, as soon as he got his breath.

" I hove the log, and found she was going a little better than five ; so I told him five and a quarter.

" ' Five and a quarter ! ' he yelled ; ' turn the hands up—shorten sail, shorten sail at once, for heaven's sake ! I've been in this ship nearly eighteen years and never saw her go five before ; ' and with that off he ran and let go the main-topgallant-halliards himself, and we snugged her down to close reefs.

" Talking about logs, we'll heave ours, just to see how fast she was travelling. Heave the log !

" No, not you—let Barrett, hold the reel ; she'll take the line pretty smart, and you won't be able to hold it."

" Clear glass ? "

" Clear glass, sir."

" Turn ! "

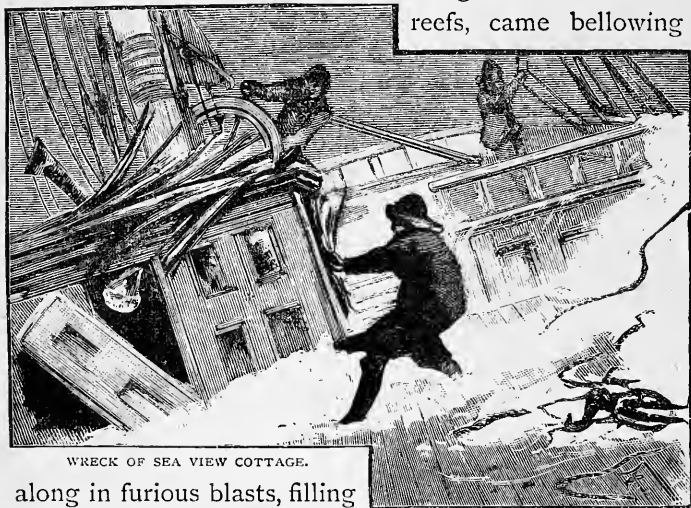
" Stop ! "

" Twelve and a half," remarked the mate. " H'm, I didn't think she was going so fast as that."

That day's run brought us down to the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope ; and, the strong breeze continuing, we soon reached the parallel of 42° south, upon which the captain intends to run down his easting.

It is so bitterly cold, especially at night. I wrap myself up as well as I can, but the wind seems to blow right through any thickness of clothes.

We didn't get clear of the Cape without having a visit from the Storm Fiend, for one morning the clouds came driving up as black as ink from the south-west, and the wind, which had been strong enough before to bring us down to close reefs, came bellowing



WRECK OF SEA VIEW COTTAGE.

along in furious blasts, filling the air with driving spray so that one could scarcely see a couple of ship's lengths in any direction, while the stately seas came heaving up in tremendous masses—a grand array of steadily advancing billows, as regularly spaced as the furrows in a ploughed field.

How it blew! We were hove to long before the gale was at its height, and even under her close-reefed maintopsail and foretopmast-staysail our ship was forging

ahead quite two knots, with the lee side of her decks all awash.

About ten o'clock, just as the watch were told to go below, a heavy sea came surging along and broke right over the weather rail; its full force struck our house, and when the whirling foam had subsided, I saw that the place was wrecked, the front and one end being completely stove in.

After smashing up our berth the volume of water rolled to leeward with irresistible force, and, ripping off the bulwarks as though the thick planks were so many sheets of paper, rushed tumultuously overboard.

There was a mess! The men came scrambling aft when they saw what had happened, and with their assistance we managed to drag our chests for'ard into the forecastle and save such of the bedding and clothes as were dry. The rest were simply bundled together anyhow, and slung down into the forepeak for the present.

Fortunately no one was in the house when the damage was done, though Edwards and I were just going below; and in fact if I hadn't made a run for it when I saw the sea coming it would have been all up with poor Tommy Davie, as far as one might judge.

"Now Sea-View Cottage is busted up, I suppose you'll condescend to reside with us at the Hôtel de Matelôt," said Jack Gudgeon, as I was sitting disconsolately on my chest, looking through the half-open door of the forecastle at the smashed front of our berth.

"Never mind," he continued, "you might be in worse quarters. While you were living in that old hut aft

there, you was neither one thing nor t'other—neither officer nor man ; you're one of us now, you know, one of the regular shellbacks.

“Now haul off your wet clothes while I get a bunk ready for you, there's a couple of spare ones each side of the forecandle ; but as there's only two dry beds, you and your little chum can turn in and out of one for a bit, and Edwards and Featherstone will do similar, until we get a fine day to dry the wet things.

“Hang your oilskins on that nail by the head of your bunk, and put your sea-boots underneath ; I'll shove your chest over to leeward, alongside of mine.

“There,” said Jack, spreading a couple of blankets over the bunk. “Now turn in quick ; I'm going to open out for a snooze myself.”

“Thank you, so much, Jack,” said I.

“What for ?” exclaimed he ; “we always looks out for shipwrecked mariners and strangers in distress—and if you ain't shipwrecked, you're next door to it, seeing as your home is broke up.”

Jack's bunk was the one next to mine, in the same tier, and after he had turned in he looked over to ask if I was comfortable. I was snuggled up in the blankets by then, feeling so jolly and warm, so I answered him by saying I couldn't be better aboard a man-o'-war—which was a remark I had often heard him make.

“Very well,” said he, laughing, “go to sleep, for seven bells will be here before long.”

I didn't go to sleep, though, for some little time ; the wild roar of the wind, which was ever so much more

audible here than in our berth, effectually kept me awake, and, besides its screeching, every now and again a heavier wave than usual would crash against the weather-bow, sending tons of water swirling away to leeward along the deck above my head. These sounds, added to the pitching, groaning, and complaining noises going on all around, made a perpetual uproar that was almost deafening; and when, after awhile, I did manage to doze off, a heavier plunge than usual, or an accession to the mad fury of the gale, would wake me up with a start and set my heart thumping with apprehension.

The gale lasted until after midnight, and then gradually subsided into a strong, hard breeze. We bore up as soon as possible, and at four o'clock in the morning the ship was again on her course with everything packed upon her that she could drag along under. There was still a wild sea running, the result of the late blow, but no more came aboard; and indeed the *Albatross* was flying along on an almost even keel, and, as she rolled nothing to speak of, we were able to get about the decks in comfort.

This sort of weather continued for a week or ten days—nothing but heavy gales, cold, drenching rain, with sleet and hail at times, and general unpleasantness. Then, having got far enough to the eastward, we shaped a course more northerly, and in two or three days, aided by a fine fresh breeze from the south-east, the ship was once more in warm latitudes, much to my comfort and delight.



CHAPTER XIV.

rites and ceremonies.

THE PIPE OF PEACE—THE HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR MONKEY'S
ISLAND—TITTLE-TATTTLING—CEREMONY OF INITIATION.

THE carpenter made an exhaustive survey upon the state of our battered house, and as, in his opinion, it would take him six weeks to repair the damage, even if he had sufficient teak to make good the split woodwork—which he hadn't—it was judged advisable to have it seen to in Hong Kong; and we boys are therefore to be quartered in the forecastle for the rest of the passage, at all events.

If Edwards or Featherstone should ever read this, I most humbly beg their pardon for calling them "boys;" and indeed it isn't my fault, for I am only repeating what the captain told Mr. Harvey when the subject of our future residence was mentioned and decided upon.

"That sea knocked saucepans out of your shanty, eh, Tommy?" said the mate to me when the captain had

gone below at the conclusion of the conversation I have alluded to, which took place about half-past eight one evening. "Carpenter says he can't make it wind-tight nor water-tight; so you'll have to live with 'Jack' till we arrive out."

"I should like to live in the fore-castle altogether, sir, if no one objects," replied I; "it is much livelier than being in that stupid box, which I should be very glad to see torn up and thrown overboard to-morrow."

"Very well," said the mate coldly, and turning away. "Since you prefer it you'd better keep your own end of the ship altogether in future; when I want you I'll call you."

Oh dear, thought I, whatever have I said! I didn't go off the poop, though, but stood down to leeward by the mizen-rigging, wondering what I should do. Presently a happy thought occurred to me, and when Mr. Harvey wasn't looking I slipped down the companion into his berth, cut up a pipe of tobacco as nicely as I could and filled his favourite pipe, lighted it, and brought it up on deck. He was standing by the break of the poop, talking to the doctor, when I got back. I hope he won't be angry, thought I.

"Here's your pipe, sir, all ready lighted, and—and—please don't send me away."

"Gracious me! what a very pathetic appeal!" exclaimed the mate, laughing heartily. "There's no withstanding such apparent misery. I wonder if it's genuine, though! What do you think of it, doctor—is it the real thing, or only sham Abraham?"

"It's hard to say, but he appears to be in grave trouble over something or the other," replied the doctor, with mock gravity. "What has he done--been insubordinate and struck you, perhaps? You don't appear much knocked about, though!"

"He hasn't hit me as yet, but he as much as threatened to do so. Told me we were a set of d--d fools, nothing like as good as the sailors, and that he didn't want any more truck with us!"

"Oh, sir! I really didn't say that; I only said that I liked living in the forecastle better than in our berth. But, if you like, I'll bring my bed and things aft in the morning, and live in the ruins of Sea-View Cottage."

"What do you call it?" cried the doctor, roaring with laughter.

"Sea-View Cottage, sir; the sailors gave it that name. They are such fun! And the forecastle is the Hôtel de Matelôt, or Capstan Villa, or something equally ridiculous; when they're tired of one name they soon hit upon another. They had a parliament this evening--"

"A parliament?"

"Yes, sir; I had a newspaper or two in my chest which they got hold of, and from which they got the notion, I suppose, for when I went into the forecastle after lighting the binnacle lamp the men were sitting on their chests, which were arranged in a semicircle round the windlass, and on it was Jack Gudgeon, who was the Speaker. I was sternly ordered into the strangers' gallery, which was the upper-end bunk, and then the business continued.

“‘The question now before the cheer is this. Has the noble lord the member for Monkey’s Island used unparliamentary language to the honourable member for Maintopshire by calling of him ‘a d—d jackass’?

“‘I rules it is out of order to use such horrid bad language, therefore I shall call upon the noble lord to apologize.’

“Then the ‘noble lord’—who was Barrett—got up and expressed his regret for having used the words referred to, which, as he said, ‘wasn’t to be took literal, but was only sort of umbological like.’”

“Look here, my young friend,” interposed the mate, “if you take my advice you will keep your own counsel as to anything you see or hear for’ard. I know what sailors are : if they fancy you come aft, yarning to me or anybody else about their sayings and doings, you will get yourself into trouble.”

“But surely there is no harm in what he has said,” exclaimed the doctor.

“Not a bit in the world,” answered Mr. Harvey. “The mere fact of saying *anything* is what I mean. I’ve been before the mast myself: sailors are very peculiar animals; if they once get a notion that news finds its way aft, they’ll make the boy’s life a misery to him.”

“No doubt you are quite right,” said the doctor. “However, I won’t aid and abet Master Tommy in his tittle-tattling, so good-night.”

“I’m not to go for’ard, sir, am I? I may stay here as usual, mayn’t I?”

“Oh Lord, yes; of course you can,” laughed the mate.

"The pipe of peace has been smoked and wants refilling too, so off you go and cut up another one.

"Thanks, that's very nice, and properly lit for a wonder. I suppose you haven't taken to smoking and chewing tobacco yet? Don't let me catch you at it, that's all.

"Oh, even lighting my pipe makes you feel bad, does it? Very well, that's a very fit and proper feeling, for I've generally noticed that when boys take to smoking, my tobacco disappears in double-quick time.

"What was all the fuss about the other evening when they had you and the other boy blindfolded?"

"Oh it was such fun, sir—at least afterwards. They were making us free of the fore-castle. May I tell you?"

"Well, it was Tom Hearne who suggested that the usual rites and ceremonies ought to be observed, and that we should be duly admitted members of the Holy Order of Rope-haulers, as he called it. Of course the others fell in with the idea at once, and so in the evening Buttercup and I——"

"Who on earth is Buttercup?" interrupted the mate.

"Baby, sir. We had new names given us at the same time—he is 'Buttercup' now, and I am 'Daisy.'"

"'Carrot' and 'Turnip' would have suited you better," laughed Mr. Harvey. "However, go on."

"Well, we were blindfolded, and stuck on the fore-hatch with strict orders not to move or speak.

"By-and-by, when they were ready, I suppose, some one came and led us to the fore-castle door, upon which he knocked three times.

“‘Who stands without there?’ growled a deep voice. I didn’t know a bit whose it was.

“‘A Brother with two novices who seek admission to the Temple,’ replied our guide. (I knew who that was, it was Ross.)

“‘Have they well weighed the pains and penalties if they fail to satisfy us—have they by leading virtuous lives fitted themselves for the mysteries of our holy order?’

“‘They *has*.’

“‘Then admit them in the name of the great Noah, the founder of our Brotherhood.’

“‘Oh, I haven’t!’ cried I. ‘I’d rather not go in. Don’t let us go, Baby!’

“‘Don’t be scared, you ain’t going to be hurted,’ whispered Ross.

“‘Then the door slid back and we were pushed in.

“‘Kneel!’ exclaimed the deep voice. We obeyed, of course.

“‘Rise, and walk to your front. Halt! Your names.’

“‘Charles Courtney Dawson.’ ‘Sydney Malcolm Davie.’

“‘These names do not please us. Enter them as ‘Buttercup’ and ‘Daisy,’ for such is our will and pleasure!’

“I heard a pen scratching away then. I ‘was so frightened, so was Baby—for we kept hold of each other, and his hand was quite trembling.

“‘Now for the ordeal! Bring knives.’

“A knife was thrust into my hand, and we were then separated.

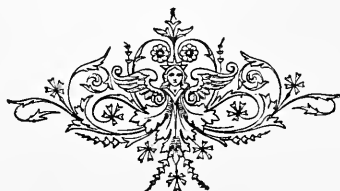
“‘Face each other. Raise your hands and strike!’

“‘Don’t you, Baby! I sha’n’t!’ I shrieked. ‘Let them kill us if they like; we won’t kill each other!’

“There was a roar of laughter at this; my hand was forced down until the blade stuck into something, and at the same moment the handkerchief was taken off my eyes—and there we stood, looking very foolish, each holding a huge knife with a lump of duff impaled on the point.”

The mate laughed heartily at this. “Who was the master of the ceremonies whose voice you didn’t recognize?” asked he.

“Why, Edwards, sir! The worst of it is, though, that they can’t forget my appeal, and now they even call the watch by yelling, ‘Don’t you, Baby! I sha’n’t! Let them kill us if they like; we won’t kill each other!’”





CHAPTER XV.

AN ANTARCTIC WINTER.

THE WHALER—FROZEN IN—THE KING OF THE CANNIBAL ISLAND—
DEATH OF TOM DENNIS—RELEASED AT LAST—A SAD MESSAGE.

I SN'T it getting hot, Daisy? We'll start the sing-songs on the forecastle-head again this evening ; no more cold weather now. You don't perticular hanker arter snow and hail and them bitter winds, do you ?”

“Oh, rather not, Jack ; this is a jolly sight nicer. Only fancy, a week ago we were almost frost-bitten, and now everybody is running about barefooted again.”

“You're a reg'lar butterfly sailor, I can see,” replied Gudgeon. “Well, yes, it was pretty cold two or three days ago, but nothing to talk about when a man has been froze in for a whole winter down to the south'ard there, like I've been.

“Oh ay, you want to know all about it now—that's what them eyes of yours is saying, plain as the day.

Just as if I hadn't got something better to do this good watch below than be yarning with you.

"I suppose I must tell you how it was, though, for the sake of peace and quietness.

"Well, you see, I was in a whaler—the *Eliza Sharpe* was her name—and we'd been knocking about for a long while without getting no great good luck, so the captain reckoned he'd try further south, where we could pick up seals, anyway, and perhaps find a whale or two. They was mighty scarce where we was cruising, which was somewheres about where we are now, I should think.

"So down to the south'ard we went, amongst the ice.

"That was cold weather, if you like—least I thought so at the time—but 'twas the height of summer compared to what we had to go through. I didn't know that, though, not then.

"There was still no signs of any whales, so we sailed on and on, and bimeby we come to land of some sort. 'Where there's land there's seals,' said the skipper, so we stood in under our topsails and jib, dodging the lumps of ice that was floating about wherever you was minded to look; the water was studded with them, some big and some small, all manner of shapes and all sizes.

"We ran along the land for a good hour, I should think, and then we came to a little bay, where the captain allowed he'd bring up for a bit, for the rocks all round was thick with seals. So there we anchored in nine fathoms of water and good holding-ground, and stayed there best part of a week killing and skinning seals, until at last they got scarce and hard to get at.

"Well, one evening I heard the old man say that he was going to clear out the next day, seeing as winter was coming on. Glad enough was I to hear that, I can tell you.

"Howsumever, he might as well have spared his breath, for that very night it came on to blow a living gale of wind, and next morning we found we was regular jammed, for the entrance to our bay was blocked in by a great floe of ice, and outside there was nothing but ice, that had been drove up by the wind, as far as eye could reach.

"We soon found out that there was no way of getting the ship into the open water unless the ice shifted itself. There was nothing we could do, for there wasn't the least bit of a channel anywhere, and we might as well have tried to get out through the cliffs as through the ice, every bit.

"Days and weeks went by, and at last the captain gave up all hopes of getting the ship out before winter set in in earnest ; so we turned to and made the best preparations we could for hanging it out where we was until the next summer.

"We boarded-in the after part of the 'tween decks, and lined the inside with furs, and fetched the galley-stove down below and laid in a good stock of firewood. For that we sawed and split up the topgallant masts and yards, the spare spars, and everything that could be done without if we was ever to get into blue water again.

"We made ourselves suits of clothes, too, out of the seal-skins, and did all we could to weather it out as

comfortable as possible. All this time it had been getting colder and colder, and at last the water in the bay was froze two feet thick ; and the days got shorter and shorter, until by-and-by the sun never rose at all over the sea of ice, and it was one long dreary night, with the great silent stars marching along overhead in endless array.



FROZEN IN.

“ We was quite five weeks, during the height of the winter, without anybody daring to venture out on deck, and all the exercise we got was by running round and round the 'tween decks, and even there it was Lord knows how many degrees below zero. Why, a bottle of rum as the skipper set outside the door of the berth was froze right through and busted the glass all to shivers

in no time, and there was the rum standing on the deck one mass of ice.

“What do you say? — it would have made a good cough-drop! Well, so ’twould.

“The captain hit on all manner of ways to keep us busy, for idleness is more killing than cold. So he started a school for one thing; and some of us went play-acting, and learnt up a piece as the second mate wrote for us. What with making the dresses and rigging up a stage, that gave us employment for a couple of weeks or so.

“Then there was the performance—fust-rate it was too. The piece was called ‘The King of the Cannibal Island.’ I’ve seen a play by the same name acted at the Coliseum Theayter in Liverpool, but it wasn’t the same as ours, and not so good I don’t think. Mr. Fuller, the second mate, was a bit of a poet, do you see, and the way he strung it up was fust-rate.

“We got a proper scene painted and hung up at the back of the stage, to make it look like a nice island, with trees and things growing, and the sea showing in between. It looked beautiful, after what we knowed was outside our poor old froze-in ship.

“Well, there was a vessel supposed to be wrecked on this island, and when the curtain went up there was the captain waiting to tell you so, and just start the consarn with a bit of a song. After that the rest of us came on in our turn.

“There was me—I was the darkey cook, Snowball; a gal called Constantia—you never saw such a rig-out

as she had on—one of the youngsters took the gal's part ; the king of the island and three savages ; two missionaries ; and a man as was a photographer. The captain and Constantia, and the photographer chap and me, was all that was supposed to get ashore out of the wreck, and the missionaries was there before we arrived ; so was the savages. Our lot was on the stage first, singing and dancing, and yarning about the wreck and the like. And when that was done we went away to look for grub, all but the photographer—I forget what his name was now ; anyway he stayed behind and sung a song about how he was an artist, and couldn't get on in the world because folks wouldn't buy his pictures. When that song was finished, the savages came on, hollering and shouting, and the photographer hid himself behind a tree while they were rousting about the stage ; and after they'd had their say—during which you got to know that they wasn't real savages, but only make-believe, being shipwrecked people, like us, as had painted themselves up—they cleared off ; and then it was our turn to come on again, and I had to sing another song, called 'What an arternoon.'

"After that the two missionaries came on, and me being a nigger, they made out that I was a regular native of the island, and started giving me tracts and things ; and in the middle of it the savages came back and took us all prisoners. Well, there was a rumpus over that, and so I, being the cook, offered to roast all the other captives if they'd let me go free—which was agreed to ; and then the photographer made similar terms in regard of taking

their likenesses; and all such tomfoolery as that. So we were drawed up in a group, and the likeness was taken, and handed round afterwards, and when our captain saw it he recognized one of the savages—the king, I think—as being an old shipmate of his called Jim Robinson. So of course the whole affair ended up nice and pleasant, and then a ship hove in sight, all hands joined in a chorus, and down came the curtain. We played that piece every night for a month; seemed like they'd never get tired of it. And so with one thing and another we managed to while away the time until we was able to go outside for a run on the ice again. One day the skipper called us all up on deck to where he was standing, holding a watch in his hand and looking away out to the nor'ard, and as we was all gazing in the same direction we seed the least bit of red creep above the ice, and as slowly disappear.

“‘That's the sun, my lads,’ cried the captain, shutting up his watch.

“Of course we gave three cheers—hearty, grateful cheers they were, too, for the sight of the sun put hope in our hearts, and livened us all up wonderful. So far we'd been very fortunate in not having sickness aboard, and now that the worst of the winter was gone we reckoned none would come. It did, though, for before a week had passed by after we caught the first glimpse of the sun, a young ordinary seaman, called Tom Dennis, as had been the life and soul of the ship all these long dreary months, and was a general favourite with all hands, was took with a violent fever; and though the

captain doctored him as well as he knew how, and the rest of us nursed him as tender and gentle as could be, he got worse and worse, and at last we all knowed he was going to die.

“Poor boy, he was lying on the heap of skins we’d made up for him, the morning of his last day on earth, delirious with fever, and talking wild about all sorts of things, fancying he was plucking flowers by the side of a stream, with green fields and trees all around; and then all of a sudden he came to quite rational, and lay looking at me.

“‘Jack,’ he said after a bit, though his voice was so faint and low I could scarce hear what he said. ‘Jack, I’m off; my number’s flying. You’ve been a good, true friend to me; promise, if ever you get back to England—go and see my poor old mother. Take her the Bible that is in my chest, and tell her I died peaceful and happy, and that my last thoughts was of her—and—Susan—mother ’ll know. Say I died true, and my love was hers to the last.’

“I couldn’t speak, but I wrung his hand, and then he smiled the sweetest smile I ever saw—and so passed quietly away.

“We buried him out on the point, in a grave we dug in the snow, and on the little wooden cross that we stuck in to mark the spot was written a few words of a song he was very fond of singing—

‘He was the darling of our crew, but now he’s gone aloft.’

“Poor boy! Ah well, he wasn’t to lie there alone

though ; for by the time the sun got power, and the ice began to melt, there was five more little crosses stuck in alongside of his, for we lost the second mate and four able seamen the same way.

“ However, at last the ice broke up, and the big floe slowly melted away, and was carried off to sea the first time it came on to blow off the land, and the next morning we hove our anchors up and stood out.

“ As we sailed slowly past the point where our poor shipmates were lying, we took off our hats, and there wasn’t a man in the ship as didn’t cry like a child.”

“ Did you go to see Tom’s mother and his sweetheart when you got back to England ? ” I asked.

“ Well, I did, and I didn’t,” replied Jack. “ I went down to Halstead and found out his mother, easy enough, and gave her the Bible and a lock of her son’s hair. Poor old soul, she was dreadful cut up, as made my heart bleed ; but the other bit of hair, as I’d cut off for the girl, I kept for myself, for the old woman told me as how Susan had got married to the village shoemaker long ago—and, strangely enough, the wedding took place on the very day we carried the poor lad to his last rest in that desolate and icebound land.

“ There’s three bells striking, so take the hook-pots to the galley, and see you throw the old tea-leaves overboard this time.”



CHAPTER XVI.

HIGH JINKS.

OUTWARD-BOUND RESTAURANT—THE *MENU*—TRIAL BY JURY—VERDICT
AND SENTENCE.

LOOK at the *menu* I've written. What do you think of it?" laughed Edwards, as I re-entered the forecastle.

"There it is," said he, pointing to a piece of paper that was pinned against the bulkhead, on which I read :

Outward-Bound Restaurant.

MENU.

Soups.

Soup de bouillion (two buckets of water and one onion). Peasoup (cold).

Fish.

Boiled cod, au Lot's wife ; and ropeyarn sauce.

Entrées.

Dog's body sauté à la shellback. Scouse and coal-tar jelly.

Removes.

Boiled pork (cold). Pork, boiled (cold). Cold boiled pork.

Sweets.

Soaked biscuits au rum. Sucre au naturel. Weevils.

Dessert.

Plug tobacco.

Tea, vintage 1822.

Limejuice.

"What an *ass* you are, Edwards!" I exclaimed, laughing at this absurdity.

"What a *what* am I?"

"Take care, Edwards! Take care! Don't humbug! Mind the tea—you'll capsize it all!"

"Pass round the hook-pots, boy," said Gudgeon. "Leave him alone now, Edwards; we'll give him a fair trial after tea, and if he's found guilty he'll be punished according to law."

"Ah, that'll do; we'll have a proper judge and jury," remarked another.

"Very well," laughed Edwards, "that will be good fun; meanwhile there shall be a truce sounded, so come over here, you brat, and pick the weevils out of a couple of biscuits."

"Poor stuff, this here tea is," observed Ross.

"Gets wus and wus," said another.

"It's like sojers' soup—warm and wet, and that's all."

"Tastes to me more like physic."

"Strain it through your teeth and chew the leaves, you'll ketch the flavour of it then."

"There's a good wholesome taste of dish-rags about it, anyway."

"Ah, the tea's right enough," remarked Barrett; "some of ye'd growl to have your mouths stuffed with diamonds. Minds me of the skipper who thought he'd do a great stroke and give the sailors ham for their breakfast for a treat; and, much to his surprise, they all came trooping aft, with their leader carrying a dishful of prime rashers."

"What's wrong, men?"

“ ‘ The ham, sir.’ ‘ What’s amiss with the ham ? ’

“ ‘ Nothing, sir—*but there ain’t no eggs !* ’ ”

* * * * *

“ The jury being sworn in, the business of the court will now commence,” said Jack Gudgeon, who was judge. “ Silence in the court ! Call the first case.”

“ Edwards agin Davie.”

“ Who appears for the—what’s his name ? ”

“ Prosecutor, my lord. I appear in person.”

“ And who appears for the—the persecuted ? ”

“ I do, my lord,” replied Featherstone. “ I shall conduct the case for the defence, with your lordship’s kind permission.”

“ Go ahead, then.”

“ My lord, and gentlemen of the jury, the desperate and ferocious prisoner at the bar——”

“ My lord,” interrupted Featherstone, “ I object to these epithets being applied to my client, which, if allowed to pass unnoticed, might prejudice my case in your lordship’s eyes and in those of the gentlemen of the jury.”

“ Quite right ; quite right. I must ask—ahem !—the learned gentleman to use a little less language.”

“ Very well, my lord, I stand corrected. The prisoner at the bar, then, of whom I go in fear and danger of my life, did, without provocation, on or about half-past five o’clock this evening, describe me as an ass, and moreover threaten to scald me to death with boiling tea ; for which grievous offences I pray he may be punished as the law directs, and that this honourable court will grant me its

protection from his violence in the future. In support of my case I call John Barrett, though I am grieved to say that a most important witness, Thomas Hearne to wit, is unavoidably absent, he being now engaged in steering the parish in which this court is situated."

John Barrett, being properly sworn, deposed: Am an able seaman. Have been so for twenty-one years. First knew the prisoner at the bar about two months ago. Have noticed his dangerous temper on several occasions since. Was present in the forecandle when the assault took place, and heard the words referred to. Trembled with fear lest Edwards should be seriously injured. Am of opinion that nothing but the interference of the rest of the watch saved him from bodily harm.

Cross-examined: Have never sailed under any other name than John Barrett. That is my right name, and have never had any other. Admits, though, that, on second thoughts, may have been known as "Monster," "Jack Sheppard," and many other names.

Ordered to stand down by Featherstone.

John Ross, being called, deposed: Am also an able seaman. Heard the prisoner at the bar call prosecutor "a hass," and threaten to scald him like a pig. Was afraid to venture near. Knew prisoner was a powerful and determined person, and didn't care to interfere.

Cross-examined: Am a native of Scotland, and twenty-six years old. Have heard of whisky toddy, and am rather partial to it; also like whisky with burgoon. Was perfectly sober at the time the alleged assault took place—am quite sure of this. Have not, in fact, been

drunk for over two months. Should not object to going on the bust if a chance were to present itself. Can read and write, and am not subject to fits. Saw the paper that was pinned to the bulkhead. Did not think it was a treasonable document, or one reflecting in any way on the character of the prisoner. Couldn't understand French, so did not quite know what it was all about.

End of case for the prosecution.

"My lord and gentlemen," said Featherstone, "I purpose—without going into the merits of the evidence you have just heard, any comment upon which I shall reserve—to proceed at once by calling witnesses for the defence. I hope to show you most clearly and unmistakably that the prisoner is quite innocent of the trumpery—I speak advisedly—the trumpery charge that has been brought against him." The learned counsel then resumed his seat amidst some slight applause, which was immediately suppressed.

Charles Courtney Dawson, the first witness called, deposed: Am fifteen years old, and know the nature of an oath. Was standing by the galley door when prisoner came to fetch the tea. Noticed nothing peculiar in his appearance, excepting that he looked rather sad. Asked him what was the matter, and was told that Jack—beg pardon—his lordship had been telling him a melancholy story about a young sailor who died and was buried in the snow. Am quite sure prisoner was not at all savage or ferocious. (Witness was here reproved by the court for laughing.) Thought he was quite the reverse. Had not seen or heard

anything of the assault complained of. Had not quarrelled with prisoner, and was sure he never should. Asked what he thought of him, refused to answer ; but on being pressed and threatened with punishment for contempt of court, blushed and said he thought he was a very nice boy indeed.

The learned judge here interposed, - and, remarking that he had promised to attend a concert that evening, intimated his intention of summing up at once.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said he, "it is my dooty to say a few words on this case what you have listened to with such close attention. Fust of all I wants to point out that the witness Barrett contradicted himself as regards his name, thereby a-perjuring as I might say. And the next witness, Ross, is by his own showing a drunken wretch as glories in the licker he has swallowed. There ain't much faith to be put in what they've said ; but for all that discipline must be maintained, and I think myself that you will find the prisoner at the bar has been guilty of some sort of offence against the laws of the land. Make your minds up one way or t'other as quick as you like, for time's a-going on."

The jury, without leaving the box, found a verdict of "Guilty," but strongly recommended the prisoner to mercy. Then, silence having been obtained, his lordship passed sentence as follows :

"Prisoner at the bar, you have been found guilty of this horrible crime, which in one so young is most terrible to think of. The sentence of the court is that you be at once, if not sooner, removed from here to the

forecastle head, there to dance the sailor's hornpipe until further orders. Rocky, get the whistle-pipe—Doctor, fetch your banjo ; let's have ' Jack's the Lad.' Come on boys, we'll make a Saturday night of it ! ”



THE HORNPIPE.



CHAPTER XVII.

TOIL AND TROUBLE.

CLEANING SHIP—RUBBING AND SCRUBBING—A SQUALL—A GOOD WASH—
THE READING-LAMP—A REVELATION.

ALL hands, in the afternoon watch again, on Monday, Tommy," said the mate to me that night.

"All hands, sir! Why?"

"Oh, lots of work to do now, cleaning ship for Hong Kong: blacking down the rigging—scraping masts—holystoning decks—woodwork to be cleaned and painted—all the bright-work to be scraped and varnished. Plenty to do, I can tell you, for the next fortnight or so."

"But we sha'n't be kept without an afternoon watch below for a whole fortnight, shall we, sir?"

"Indeed you will, sir," replied Mr. Harvey; "and think yourself lucky that you get any watch below at all in the daytime."

Oh dear! here's a prospect, thought I.

"'Tisn't every ship where you get watch and watch, I can tell you," resumed the mate. "Why in plenty of vessels that I've sailed in there hasn't been such a thing as an afternoon watch below even thought of, all the voyage."

"But what's the good of it, sir, after all? The ship doesn't sail along any quicker for it."

"Ah, that's what you think; you haven't lived a fortnight in the fore-castle for nothing, I can see. Getting to be a regular old whale, hanged if you aren't. There's seaweed growing all down your back, I'll be bound. Don't stand there laughing at me, you impertinent young jackanapes, or I'll seize you up in the mizen-rigging by the thumbs! What a row you were all kicking up for'ard there, in the second dog-watch; getting lively now the ship's in warm weather again, I suppose. Where did you learn step-dancing? Oh, the cook in the *Worcester* taught you, did he. That's where you learnt some of your old-fashioned ways too, I suppose. Don't stand there like a stuffed monkey!—talk about something.

"What are you to talk about? How do I know? What's all this Edwards has been telling me of a log you're keeping? Oh, it's for your people to read when you get home again. I must have a look at it, some day, to see there is nothing treasonable in it. What do you write in it—'Dead calm with the wind at south.' 'Caught a porpoise and lost it again,' and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"Well, I want to make my log rather more extensive than that if I can sir," replied I. "I stick down any-

thing in it—things I hear said, yarns, and all sorts. Edwards has written a lot for me, descriptions and so on, that I can't manage by myself. I've got that tale you told me, of how you chased and took the mutineers, in it—I hope you don't mind?"

"Here's a pretty state of affairs," laughed the mate. "I shall have to be very careful what I say to you in future, that's clear. You'd better be careful what you write in your precious log. There'll be death in the camp if I find any sneering allusions or disparaging remarks about me in it. Oh, there aren't any, and you are quite sure there never will be any, eh? That's only what you say; I must read it through first, then I shall be able to find out whether you are telling the truth or not—seeing's believing. Oh no, I won't show it to anybody else. Bring it into my berth after dinner to-morrow; I'm rather anxious to know what your ideas are upon things in general, and it will help to while away a Sunday afternoon, anyhow."

With that he walked aft, and I, having a notion that it was going to rain shortly, went and fetched his oilskins; and afterwards I brought my own and Barrett's—who was at the wheel—from the fore-castle.

"Oh, you think we shall have rain, do you? Well, so do I; and see here, sonny, I want a wash to-morrow morning, so try and catch some water if it rains hard enough; hang a bucket on to the nose of one of the boats, and get some for yourself as well, for to my certain knowledge you haven't had a wash for a fortnight. You'd better get into the wash-deck tub and

be scrubbed first, though, just to get some of the thick off. There's wind as well as rain in that squall, I know. Clew the main-skysail up!"

"Clew the main-skysail up, sir," repeated somebody from for'ard.

"Now, do you think you are man enough to go up and make it fast? Very well, up you go then, and if you are smart you'll get down again before the rain comes. No, not you, Edwards, let the boy go."

I had just made fast the bunt gasket when the squall struck us, its first burst made the ship heel over tremendously, and sent her buzzing through the water at a fine pace. Then—smack—came a flash of lightning, quite close it appeared, lighting up the scene for a second and showing me the ship tearing furiously along, so far beneath my feet. The lightning was instantly followed by a rattling, crashing roll of thunder, which seemed above, below, and all around me. And then down came the rain in sheets. The din was terrible, and I'm bound to confess to being a bit frightened, what with the thunder, and the slatting, flouncing of the main-royal (the halliards had been let go when the first gust came) and the spring of the mast as the ship went plunging along. Altogether it wasn't pleasant, and I was jolly glad when I got down as far as the topmast-rigging. The squall had driven away to leeward by the time I reached the deck, so the royals were promptly hoisted again.

"Why, boy," said Mr. Harvey, "you look as though you'd been under a pump; where's your sou'-wester?"

"It blew overboard, sir, just when you let go the royal-halliards."

"Why didn't you go after it?"

"Well, sir, I very nearly did; not that I particularly wanted to go, but the wind came so suddenly that it almost blew me away too."

"Why didn't you get under the lee of the mast?" replied Mr. Harvey, with a laugh. "Oh, it's four o'clock, is it? Strike eight bells, then, and go and call the second mate."

"Isn't it jolly hot?" said Baby to me after breakfast. "I think we're going to have a fine day," he further remarked, after gazing round the horizon in a critical sort of way. "Where did you get all that water?" asked he, observing the bucketful I had just lugged along from aft.

"I caught it last night when it rained so. There's plenty for us both, so come and have a good wash."

"All right—thanks. I'll go and get some soap and a towel."

"I say, aren't we simply filthy!" I exclaimed, when he returned. "What would they say at home if they could only see us now?"

"Never you mind what they'd say at home," said Edwards, who was sitting on the spars. "My opinion on the subject is of far greater importance just now; you couldn't be dirtier if you resided on a dust-heap. Ten minutes will be allowed you for washing and shifting into clean clothing, and at the end of that time you will be paraded on the fore-hatch for inspection."

"Now! What do you say, Jack? Can we pass them?"

"I dunno, I'm sure," replied Gudgeon; "I think they look very nice, though. Clean faces and clean clothes makes a lump of difference, don't it?" -

"Yes, well I think you'll do. Right turn! Dismiss."

"What are you going to do now, Baby? I'm going to turn my chest out and set the things straight; it's in a terrible muddle now."

"So shall I; mine's in a dreadful state too. I hope they won't want us on the poop."

"We belong to the sailors' end now," replied I, "and I sha'n't go unless I'm called. Come along into the fore-castle, and then they can't see us."

"Whatever have you got there?"

"Oh, isn't it a joke?" replied Baby. "This is a reading lamp made to screw on to the edge of one's bunk—so My uncle gave it to me. He went to America and back once, in a steamer, and so he made me a present of this thing, and told me how jolly he had found it at night when he wanted to lie and read. He told me, too, that he thought I should often feel the comfort of it! Isn't it a lark? And here's a picture of our church—my sister sketched it for me—isn't it nicely done? That's the Rectory over there; you can just see one end of it through the trees. That's my bedroom window, the top one: the sun shines right slick in there in the mornings."

"Let's look," said Barrett, who was sitting on his chest mending clothes. "I seem to know that place; where is it?"

"Alderford, in Leicestershire!" exclaimed he. "What do you know about Alderford?"

"Well, I was born there, and my father is the rector," replied Baby.

"Then you've heard tell of Anne Barrett?" said Jack, after a pause.

"I should think I have. Why, she was my nurse."

"Well, she's my sister."

"Your sister!" exclaimed Baby. "Why I've heard her say she had a brother a sailor, who hadn't been heard of for ever so long, and everybody thought he was drowned."

"That's me; I haven't been a-nigh the place for eight years—more shame for me. Tell me, boy," said Barrett, his voice sunk almost to a whisper, "are the old people still living in the little cottage by the stream, where the bridge is?"

"Oh, Jack," replied Baby, his voice faltering with emotion, "your father and mother have been dead for three or four years, and Anne has been living at the Rectory ever since."

There were several of the men in the forecastle while this conversation had been going on, but, one by one, they all went out when they heard this, and as I followed them I heard poor Barrett groan out, "Then I have brought their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."



CHAPTER XVIII.

A WEARY WEEK.

RESULT OF READING THE LOG—BEFORE TAKEN TO BE WELL SHAKEN—
COAXING THE COOK—SKYLARKING.

BOY!"

"Sir," replied I, running aft to the mate who had called.

"What are you projicking with, for'ard there; whose watch on deck is it?"

"Mine, sir."

"Then why aren't you aft here on the poop? Turning your chest out! I'd turn you inside out for three pins. Mr. Simkins,"—turning to Billy Looney, who was lolling against the mizen-rigging—"you'd scarce believe it, but this boy is the plague of my life; he gives me more trouble than all the rest of the watch put together."

"Well I'm weally sowwy to hear you say that. I have always been under the impwession that he was a good boy and you were vewy fond of him—at least that's what you told me and Doctor Forbes a day or two ago," said Billy Looney, laughing.

"Ah! I meant over the left. Look at him now, standing there grinning at me to my very face! Go down into my berth, you small villain, fetch up the dirty water and throw it overboard. Yes, sir, the soapy water, sir, and mind you don't soil your pretty jacket. Heave it clear of the ship's side now; if only a drop goes there I'll sling you in a bowline and make you lick it off."

"I should imagine that you wather like Sundays, eh, Tommy? Don't you quite enjoy being clean and wespectably dwessed? I should if I were you."

"Yes, sir," said I; "I wish Sunday came every other day."

"Oh, no doubt," quoth the mate; "but only because there's nothing much to do—that's the only reason—laziness, sheer laziness, that's all."

The captain came on deck just then to get sights, and I was sent off to the after cabin to watch the chronometers and read off the time. I like doing this; it is great fun watching the three second-hands tick-ticking along—each one different, of course. Then comes the signal, and quick!—one has to note what each shows, and be smart over it too, I can tell you.

After dinner I brought my log-book to the mate's cabin as previously arranged.

"Ah, here you are then. Now let's overhaul this wonderful log—full of lies as h—I's full of Scotch doctors, no doubt. Sit yourself down on my chest; I'll lie in my bunk and hear you read it—wait a bit till I light my pipe. There now, heave around."

Well, I read away for ever so long, and by-and-by the

mate's pipe dropped right on my book, and when I looked at him he was fast asleep! Now isn't this very encouraging? thought I. However, I felt rather drowsy myself, and as I didn't like to go away for fear he should hear me and wake up, I lay right back on his chest and followed suit.

"Eight bells, Mr. Harvey! Hulloo, Tommy, what are you doing here? I've been looking for you everywhere. It's eight bells."

"All right, boy, I hear you," said the mate, sitting up in his bunk and yawning. "Why, that log of yours has sent us both asleep," laughed he—"though you dozed off first, I'll swear."

There's a fib, thought I.

"How far did you get with it?"

"How far do you remember, sir?" was my cautious reply.

"Oh, you'd just got the ship as far as the line, I think. Anyhow, clear out now, the pair of you."

"What flocks of pigs you and Mr. Harvey were driving to market when I went to call him!" remarked Baby, as we walked along the main-deck. "His were tremendous pigs, though; yours were only little squeakers!"

"I'll 'flock' you on the nose, you Buttercup, if you aren't careful. I'm sure I don't snore."

"Oh, don't you, though! Ask Featherstone, we've heard you scores of times; and as for Edwards, he simply roars. I believe it is your fault that the house was banged in so easily, you'd made it all loose with your snoring. I think it was very low and common of

Mr. Harvey to fall asleep while you were reading your log ; it must be very uninteresting, though. I wouldn't write any more of it, if I were you."

" Oh yes, I shall ; but I must stick in a note at the beginning to say that people aren't to read it when they feel at all drowsy."

" Put, ' Before taken to be well shaken,' on the first page," laughed Baby. " They'll know what that means—' shake um up, make um libely,' as the old cook would say, wouldn't you, cookey ?" addressing that worthy, who was lounging in the galley doorway.

" What dat ? More of your imperance, I be boun ! Sartin sure sign o' warm weather coming when boy sass the cook. Cold weather, be fond o' buzzin' roun' the galley fire ; mighty respekful den—speak quiet and say ' Mister.' I know. I done been shipmates with heaps of boys afore dis v'y'ge ; dey all alike."

" Oh, but I never ' sass ' you, doctor," said I. " You're very fond of me, aren't you ? and I am so very fond of you, too ; and isn't there a jolly smell of cakes coming out of the galley ! Give us one each, you dear old cook."

" Ah, go 'long ! I believe you'd coax the berry debbil. Here—mind, dey's mighty hot ; been baked with small coal, I reckon."

" Boy Tommy !"

" Oh, there's that wretched mate again. Bother him. Yes, sir."

" Here—come here. What are you chewing now ?"

" Only a bit of cake, sir."

" Cake ! where did you steal it ?"

"I didn't steal it, sir ; the cook gave it to me."

"Oh, *pray* don't be offended," said Mr. Harvey, with mock humility. "I am so sorry to have hurt your feelings. May I ask you to kindly look in the direction of the gaff-topsail clew-line, and tell me what's amiss with it?"

"It has got foul of the topgallant brace-block, sir."

"Precisely ; so nip up and clear it."

What a dreadful week this has been, to be sure ! I make a practice of writing up my log in the afternoon watches below, but all hands have been kept on deck every afternoon since Sunday, so I haven't written a word. To-day is Saturday, and we have just finished holystoning the decks. It is nasty work ; you have to kneel down in all the wet and sharp bits of sand, and scrub the deck with a ghastly thing like a hearth-stone. It looks so funny, too, to see the men all kneeling down in rows, rubbing away, while the mate rushes about scattering sand out of a bucket or sprinkling water. He isn't a bit particular where he throws it either, and I know there was enough sand down my neck this morning to make a fair-sized beach.

There isn't to be any more "all hands," though, and next week we shall have watch and watch again. Mr. Harvey said so just as we were finishing the poop this afternoon. A piece of drift-wood passed by while we were working away, and on it was perched a sea-gull. Of course we all looked, and Jack Gudgeon said out loud, so that the mate could hear, "Ah, he's like us, all hands on deck." Mr. Harvey couldn't help

laughing at this remark, and of course everybody else did then.

"You've worked along well this week, men," said he. "I sha'n't want to keep you all up in the afternoon watch after to-day."

"Praise the Lord," replied Gudgeon.

When the poop was finished we rigged the pump, and fitted on the long hose and washed all the sand off the decks. And afterwards, not satisfied with that, Edwards, who was holding the squirter thing at the end of the hose, saw fit to deluge Baby and me with water, while the men at the pump worked away as though they were putting out a fire. We didn't mind that a bit—I liked it, for in this hot weather a wetting is quite delicious. Of course we charged at Edwards, and it was such fun, for in the scrimmage he squirted water all over himself; so he dropped the hose then and collared us, and walked off with one under each arm, and soused us into the wash-deck tub, and when we had scrambled out he took up the tub and slashed the water that was in it at us—and there was a lot, for it tumbled us over like ninepins, and we rolled ever so far down the water-way, gasping and spluttering and laughing.

I've shifted into dry clothes, and taken the opportunity to write up my log as far as this since then. There—thank goodness that's done. Now I think I'd better go aft before the mate begins to bawl for "Boy Tommy."



CHAPTER XIX.

A ROMANTIC COURTSHIP.

A SHAM FIGHT—ON THE REEF—PROAS AND PIRATES—MARY HENDERSON—LOVE AND JEALOUSY—THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE—LEFT BEHIND—SAVED—A HAPPY MEETING.

ISAY, Baby, I think they're trying to make us quarrel."

"So do I. Featherstone told me you'd been saying all sorts of things about me."

"Did he? They've been telling me just the same of you. Let's pretend to fall out, for a lark."

"Yes, that'll be great fun."

"I'll come over and kick up no end of a row with you after tea—mind you don't laugh—and then we'll go outside to fight; only, instead of fighting, we will strike attitudes and throw away our teeth, like the people do who walk about on their hands at a circus. After that I think we'd better hook it."

"Here, you fellow, *Dawson*! what do you mean by talking about me behind my back?"

"I've said nothing but the truth, *Davie*. I'm a better

man than you, though you did say I wasn't able to stow the skysail by myself—which is a beastly lie, as you well know."

"Pray what school were you at to learn such excellent manners?"

"Haileybury School! A better place than the rotten old *Worcester*, at all events."

"I've a good mind to lick you!"

"You can't, my boy!"

"Can't I? Come out on deck, and I'll precious soon show you!"

Out we went, and of course all the men followed to see the fun.

"Don't let them fight," said one. "Oh yes, what's the odds; they can't hurt each other much, and they'll be all the better friends afterwards."

"I'll be your second, Tommy," said Edwards. "Featherstone is going to be Baby's. Mind you dash at him at once, and slog him as hard as you can. In between the eyes is the best place to hit."

"All right," said I. "Let us fight it out; you won't stop us, will you?"

"Oh dear no, not for worlds!" laughed Edwards. "Now go in and win."

We rushed at each other, only, instead of hitting out, as no doubt everybody expected, we burst out laughing, twined arms, bowed to the company, sang out "Sold again!" and then fled aft to the poop.

Mr. Locke was standing there when we arrived, and laughing heartily, for he had seen the whole performance;

and when we looked round the men were laughing too, and shaking their fists at us.

"There's no sanctuary for you here!" cried the second mate. "Come and fetch them away, Edwards, if you want to."

"Then we may as well surrender peaceably," said I. So we walked for'ard and were promptly seized.

"What's the punishment to be for making fools of us?" asked Edwards.

"Two dozen across the stomachs with a duff-bag," suggested one.

"Oh, let them alone," said Gudgeon. "It's been good fun anyhow, and I haven't laughed so much for many a long day."

The mate called me aft to cut his hair yesterday, and when I'd finished—it was a cut, too!—he said, "If the trades stand, we shall see Sandalwood Island in a couple of days. I'm just going to prick her off on the chart; you can have a look if you like. There's where we were to-day at twelve o'clock, and that's the way we are going. Past all those islands—Sandalwood Island, Savu, Flores, Timour, up the Banda Sea, past Boero, through the Manipa and Gillolo passages into the Pacific. Then along here until we come to Formosa, when all we have to do is to slip through the Bashee Channel, across the China Sea, and there you are at Hong Kong."

"How long do you think it will be before we get to Hong Kong, sir?"

"Oh, about a month."

"Why don't we go straight up the China Sea, instead

of going all round the way that you have pointed out?"

"Why, because of the monsoon. The north-east monsoon is blowing down the China Sea now, and it would be a dead-beat for us if we went that way; but here, in the eastern passages as they're called, the monsoon blows from north-west, so it's a quicker way to go."

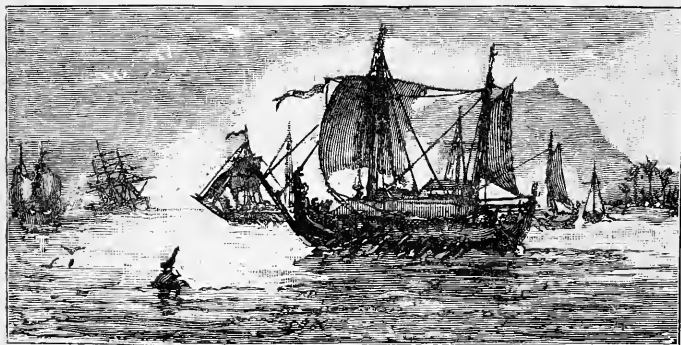
"I'm very glad we are going all among the islands, sir. Are they very pretty?"

"Pretty! d—n them! I can't make out why they were stuck there. Only to bother captains and mates, no doubt. The humbugging things are always in the way. You must get to windward of this one, or go to leeward of that one, or tack to avoid plumping the ship on the top of t'other; nothing but anxiety all the time. The people living on them, too!—a pack of vile savages, who, if you happened to come to grief, would slaughter and eat all hands, and then burn your ship for the sake of her iron fastenings! Then look at the thunderstorms they brew."

"What, the people, sir! How do they do it?"

"Don't be silly; you know well enough, I mean the islands. They nurse up a thunderstorm until some unfortunate ship comes along, and then down it comes off the land. Stand from under then, I can tell you. We went ashore once, in the old *Rajah*, on a reef close to Boero, right in the middle of a thunderstorm too. Fortunately the sea was quite smooth, or we should have been in a fine mess. As it was, we were about four hours laying out anchors and heaving cargo over-

board, before she floated off. A whole fleet of proas came out from the land when they saw we were in trouble, but we persuaded them not to come too close by plumping a shot from one of the eighteens slap into the nearest one. So they took the hint, and contented themselves with watching our operations from a safer distance. I thought they meant to attack us when the ship came off all clear; but we stood boldly towards them, and fired all our guns as soon as we got within



THE RAJAH AND THE PROAS.

range, and they, finding we were so heavily armed, shoved their helms up and left. We didn't chase them."

"But perhaps they didn't intend to attack you at first; they might have been coming to help you get off the reef."

"Not much; all the help they had any notion of was to help themselves."

"Well, I hope we aren't going to meet with any proas, said I. "There aren't any guns in our ship, and we

should be sure to be captured if any pirates came along."

"Oh, there's not much fear of that, now-a-days; all those nests of pirates were cleared out and their proas burnt long since, and it's many years ago now since a ship has been attacked. Did I ever fall across a regular pirate? Why, boy, do you think I'm as old as Methuselah! No, I've never seen a ship flying the skull and crossbones, or the black flag, or whatever it was those gentry used to sail under, and my peace of mind has never yet been disturbed by a hoarse hail to

'Back your main-topsail and heave-to under my lee;
Haul down the British ensign, or I'll sink you in the sea,'

from the quarter-deck of a long, low, rakish-looking schooner that has come sneaking up on our weather quarter—that being, I think, the correct and orthodox way of conducting these affairs. Then, of course, the captain of your British ship is expected to leap on a gun—that is if there is one anywhere handy—and express his determination never to surrender as long as his ship holds together or one true British tar is left to defend her. And then they go at it, yardarm to yardarm, broadside to broadside. Bang! whiz! flop! up goes the pirate's powder-magazine, struck by a lucky shot, and down sinks his schooner—though you (if you are the hero, if not, somebody else) just have time to dart on board the riven wreck ('riven wreck' is nice, ain't it?) and bear from thence the fair form of the inevitable damsel who has been captured by the ruthless pirate on

the day previous. You mustn't make it too long ago, or there would have to be awkward explanations, and of course she must have been in a dead swoon ever since, until the exact moment when you so opportunely arrive. There, that's about the style, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, and of course you get married to the lady when the ship arrives, and live happy ever afterwards."

"Oh, it would be preposterous to end the matter in any other way," laughed the mate.

"Sailors often do get their wives at sea, though, don't they, sir?"

"Yes, plenty of times," replied Mr. Harvey. "I did, for one, though not in the way we've just been talking about. You didn't know I was married?—well, how should you? I've been married over fifteen years; my eldest son is as big as you, and ever so much better-looking.

"You hope so?—well you may! You'll get no compliments from me, I can tell you: you are as vain as a little dog with a tin tail, already! Don't blush; only young women that want to get married blush, and they only do it when their sweethearts are looking."

"You must have been very young when you were married, sir," said I.

"Young? well, yes, twenty-five or thereabouts. I was mate of a ship then, and I'm mate now, you see," said Mr. Harvey, with some touch of bitterness in his voice; "and I dare say that mate I shall remain if I go to sea for the rest of my natural life, though I've had

extra master's certificate for the last ten years. A man must have interest or great good luck to get on at sea—I have neither one nor the other. Likely enough you'll command a ship before I do, Tommy. I'll look you up then, and ask you to ship me as boatswain, perhaps. I dare say, though, you'll turn round and remind me of the time I made you do handspike drill and welted you over the back with the end of a rope, and send me off about my business."

"Oh, indeed I shouldn't, sir! I should remind you of the time when you were always so kind and tried to teach me things, and then I should make you the captain and I would be the mate. That would be ever so much nicer, wouldn't it?"

Mr. Harvey laughed at this, and told me I was a good boy, and that it was almost a pity that I should grow up and know better.

"Was Mrs. Harvey a passenger in your ship, sir?" asked I, for what the mate had already told me on the subject had made me feel rather inquisitive.

"Ah, you want another yarn for your log, I can see," replied Mr. Harvey. "That's right, always have an eye to business."

"I won't write a word about it, sir, unless you give me leave."

"Oh, well," laughed the mate, "I don't object, and it is rather a romantic story, so you can have it if you like."

"I told you I'd been married about fifteen years, didn't I? Let me see—yes, that's right, fifteen years last

August. Well, it was about a year before that when I left London as second mate of the *Star of Hope*, belonging to the same employ as my first ship, the old *Rajah*. She was a fine powerful vessel of a thousand tons or thereabouts, ship rigged, with great single top-sails, for the double yards hadn't come into fashion then. This was only her second voyage, and we were bound to Adelaide with a general cargo and about twenty cabin passengers.

"Among the passengers were a widow lady—Mrs. Henderson—and her daughter Mary. When I tell you that Mary Henderson is now Mrs. Harvey you'll understand why I mention these two particularly. What a pretty girl she was, to be sure! I don't know that her teeth were like pearls, or her eyes like diamonds, and I'm certain she hadn't got a neck like a swan. She was only a pretty, fresh young English girl, as full of fun as a kitten, with a saucy, dimpled face, big grey eyes, and hair the colour of tarred manila.

"I wasn't bad-looking myself in those days—though you laugh, boy——"

"Oh, sir, I wasn't laughing at that. You made me laugh by saying Mary's hair was like tarred manila."

"Well, so it was, and a pretty colour too!

"I was saying," continued the mate, with emphasis, "that at that time I was rather a good-looking young fellow. Slim and clipper-built——Confound your impertinence, you saucy brat; how dare you smile in that offensive manner! I tell you I had a most genteel figure then, and looked—round the waist, at all events——"

as though I'd been fed through a keyhole with a squirt for the last six months. There you go again—was there ever such a boy!

"I make you laugh! I'll make you bundle over the side and chip iron rust off the chain-plates in your watch below for the rest of the passage, if you interrupt me once more. Mind that, now! Ah, that makes you look down your nose. I'll have you be as decorous as a maiden aunt at a funeral while I'm telling you this story. Now smile, do!—that's all I'm waiting for!"

"How can I help it, sir!" I exclaimed, laughing outright. "I believe you say these things on purpose. Besides, you're laughing yourself," said I, noticing that his features had relaxed into a sort of grim smile. "Please go on and tell me about Miss Henderson."

"Give me that cane, there in the corner, and sit further over so I can reach you easy. Do you know what this stick is called?"

"No, sir."

"Well, it's a Penang lawyer—mighty handy for settling disputes, I can tell you. Hurts, don't it? Ah, I thought so. Now, then, we'll proceed. We had a fine fresh northerly breeze in the Channel, that took us out clear of everything in a couple of days. It was pretty cold weather, and, as the ship had been knocking about a good deal in the short choppy Channel seas, none of the passengers had shown up on deck—though I must say they made their existence known to me in other ways that were perfectly intelligible.

“It was a fresh, crisp morning, the third after we left Gravesend ; the wind still held northerly, and the ship, with the yards squared and everything packed on her that would draw, was dashing along bravely through the tumbling seas, that seemed to have been stirred into brisk activity by the rays of the rising sun. We had just finished washing down the poop-deck, when I heard the captain’s voice through the open cabin skylight begging some one who was below to come out on deck ; and presently he emerged from the companion with a lady clinging to his arm, and following them was a young graceful girl——”

“With hair the colour of tarred manila? Oh!”

“Yes, with hair the colour of tarred manila. It’s a fine thing, a Penang lawyer—caught you on the funny-bone, didn’t it? Ah!

“Well, the captain introduced me to the ladies—Mrs. and Miss Henderson—and of course I made myself as agreeable as possible, fetched up camp-stools and rugs and made them comfortable ; for which services Miss Henderson thanked me so prettily, and smiled at me so sweetly, that I went and tumbled over the binnacle with confusion. Well, before we’d been at sea a month I was head over ears in love with Mary Henderson—though I had sense enough to keep my feelings to myself. Sometimes I thought she rather liked me ; other times I didn’t. Once I took it into my head that she was fonder of the third mate, who was a youngster just out of his apprenticeship ; and to show what a jealous brute I was, I led that poor boy a dog’s life—much

to his surprise, no doubt, for we'd been shipmates before, and had always been the best of friends until now. I think, though, he must have had some notion of what was in the wind, for one evening when we both happened to be in our berth—he and I had one between us owing to there being so many passengers—he pulled a photo out of his album and kissed it with great fervour.

“‘Pray, who is the fortunate object of so much affection?’ said I, with what I intended for bitter sarcasm, for, that it was a likeness of Mary, I was of course perfectly certain.

“‘Oh,’ said he, smiling, and handing me the picture, ‘it’s my cousin, the sweetest girl in the whole world; we were engaged the day before the ship sailed!’

“That caught me flat aback, and when I gave him back the photo I wrung him by the hand in an utterly uncalled-for and effusive manner, and fairly bolted out on deck.

“After that I became jealous of the captain! who was a jolly old bachelor of fifty or thereabouts; and, indeed, he certainly was far more attentive to Mrs. Henderson and her pretty daughter than I, at all events, thought necessary under the circumstances. However, he was far out of my reach, and I dare say it would have been rather unpleasant for me if he had happened to notice the cheerful scowl with which I used to watch him, when he was promenading the poop, with Mary on one arm and her mother on the other, the three of them laughing and chatting away in a manner that made me grind my

teeth with bitterness. How I used to pray that she would fall overboard so that I might dash after her, and, clasping her fair form to my heart, tell her how dearly I loved her. Many a time I have rehearsed this scene, though I never quite settled the most satisfactory conclusion to it. I was sadly divided in opinion as to whether I ought, when the boat came, to see her safely grasped and lugged in, and then, with one feeble cry of 'Mary,' to sink below the surface ; or whether I should be also saved and brought back to the ship in a fainting condition and suffering from concussion of the brain, from which I should of course recover after a little time, and then be publicly thanked for my gallantry before all the ship's company. When I was in a gloomy state of mind I inclined to the first termination. At other times, when perhaps I had had during the day a kind word and a smile from Mary, the concussion of the brain business would prevail. Well, well ! a man in love is a poor fool. Don't you think so, Tommy ?"

"Well, sir, that depends upon the Penang lawyer ! let me hold it, and I'll tell you what I think."

The mate laughed at this, and resumed his story : "We had a quick and uneventful passage out," said he, laying the stick aside and lighting his pipe, "and I never dared to say a word of love to Mary the whole time. It was my watch on deck from eight to twelve on the night before we made the land, and I was moodily leaning against the mizen-rigging, listening to the confused murmur of the passengers' voices, which came to me through the open skylights, and trying to distinguish

Mary's tones among the babble. Presently I saw the gleam of a white dress in the companion, and Mary herself came out on deck.

"‘Oh,’ she said, walking over to where I was standing, ‘how delicious the air is here after the heat of the cabin! I am so glad to be able to get out on deck, for it is perfectly tiresome to listen to the conversation below. Nothing but Adelaide is talked of; I wish it were a thousand miles away!’

"‘So do I, most devoutly.’

"‘Tell me why,’ said she; ‘I should have thought you would be only too delighted to get there, if only to be rid of your troublesome passengers.’

"I stammered and stuttered out some sort of reply to this, and then Mary said:

"‘I shall be very sorry to leave the dear old ship, where everybody, you especially, has been so very kind and nice; thank you so much, dear Mr. Harvey,’ and with that she held out her hand.

"Oh, lord! all the fat was in the fire then. I blundered out something; I don't know what I said, and never did have a very clear notion on the subject; all I know is that she replied, ‘Oh, John, I've known that for ever so long, and I've loved you, you great stupid, ever since the first day I saw you. Be quiet! don't! here's mamma and Captain Williams coming!’

"The next morning we arrived off Adelaide, and as soon as the anchor was let go, all our passengers left for the shore. Mary managed to slip a note into my hand as she was going over the side—for we hadn't had

the slightest chance to have a moment's conversation together since the previous evening—and on it were a few hurried lines to say that she did not know what her mother intended to do in the future, excepting that, as they had only come on the voyage for pleasure, and to recruit their health, she had no doubt they would be in England before we should. She concluded by giving me her address in London, and said I might call there when the ship returned, to apologize for my rude behaviour last evening. Then I was not to forget her, for she should never forget me, and it ended with much love from Mary. Well, we lay a fortnight in Adelaide, discharged our cargo, and loaded coals for Yokohama. We saw very little of Captain Williams all the time, though the day before the ship sailed he came aboard, and I heard him giving some orders to the steward to get a berth ready, so I wondered what was up. Passengers, I suppose, thought I, with vexation; whoever can be wanting to go to Yokohama! However, I had plenty to see to and soon dismissed the subject from my mind. Next morning, just as we were ready to cast off, a carriage, with no end of luggage on it, drove up to the end of the quay. Here they come, then, thought I, so I sang out for a couple of hands to jump ashore and pass the gear aboard, and then I walked for'ard to get one of the men, who was drunk and quarrelsome, below out of the way. I saw, too, that most of the others had had quite enough to drink; that was no novelty to me, though, I knew they'd soon pull themselves together when we got outside.

“‘I want to introduce you to the passengers,’ said the captain, when I walked aft again.

“Oh, bother the passengers, sir,’ I replied, ‘I want to get the hawser along, the tug will be here directly.’

“‘But they’re two such nice ladies,’ said Captain Williams, laughing, ‘come along, there’s plenty of time.’

“Oh, d—n !” thought I, as I followed him down the companion.

“‘My dear, let me introduce my second officer, Mr. Harvey—my wife !’

“*It was Mrs. Henderson*, and you might have knocked me down with a capstan-bar !

“‘Here is another old acquaintance who wants to shake hands,’ said a voice I well knew; and there, in one of the doorways, stood Mary, blushing and smiling at my confusion.

“‘Some other time, my darling,’ exclaimed the captain, maliciously; ‘Mr. Harvey is very anxious to get the hawser along, and I had great trouble to entice him below at all.’

“I didn’t care what the old villain said; I went and shook hands with Mary, and kissed her too—I couldn’t help it—whereupon the captain roared with laughter and almost choked himself, and had to be thumped on the back by his wife until he got his breath again. While he was coughing and wiping his eyes I gave Mary another hug and a kiss and went on deck, feeling as though I wouldn’t have owned to the Queen for an aunt just then, and scarcely knowing whether I was on my head or my heels. It’s nice being in love when every-

thing runs easy—like a small rope through a large block, for instance—but when it's rope-yarn over a nail, there's nothing worse. Well, we'd been at sea about a fortnight, and had got up among the islands that lie to the eastward of New Guinea, and there we lay becalmed for a couple of days in the sweltering heat. On the evening of the second day the sky looked very threatening, and there was a sort of oppression in the atmosphere as though something out of the common was about to happen. The skipper was stumping up and down the poop as fidgety as might be, and Mary and I were yarn-ing away, watching the sun as he set in sullen majesty, without a cloud to dim his molten glory.

“‘Come, Mr. Harvey, knock off billing and cooing ; clew the royals up and send the yards down at once,’ sang out Captain Williams. ‘I can smell a howling gale of wind coming along, the glass is tumbling down like a man falling out of a tree, and there’ll be wild work before long, I’m thinking. Bear a hand, there’s a good lad.’

“That was quite enough for me, of course, so I set about carrying the captain’s orders into effect at once. He was quite right in his forecast, for by midnight there *was* a furious, raging hurricane blowing. All hands had been on deck the whole of the first watch, trying to secure the sails, and one thing and another ; for as soon as we made one sail fast another blew adrift, and plenty of them got whipped to ribands before we could get at them. Just as eight bells struck, and I was thinking of going below, a frightful sea came roaring along ; it hove

the ship up on its crest, and as she plunged into the hollow it left behind, I heard a sickening crash, and saw the mizen mast and main-topgallant mast carry away, and fall headlong over the side. The ship then fell off into the trough of the sea, and the next wave buried her; it rolled right over her, and for the moment there wasn't a bit of her hull visible. I was on the main deck and the rushing water carried me away like a straw, over the rail, and twenty or thirty yards clear of the ship, and when I buffeted my way back to the surface, I saw her tearing away, dead before the wind, and in less than a minute she was out of sight. Yes, awkward for me, wasn't it? Only a few yards from me was one of the boats, the lifeboat, I saw at a glance, and it wasn't long before I was into her; she was floating right side up, like those boats always do, and though she was filled with water every time a sea swept past, her buoyancy dislodged a lot of it immediately after, and, by holding on tight to a thwart, I managed to keep inside. There was another boat, one of the gigs, a bit further off, and beyond her was the wreck of the mizen mast, so I ripped up the bottom boards and contrived to paddle my boat as far as the jumble of yards, masts, and gear, and made her fast to the first thing I got hold of, which was part of the topmast rigging. The wreckage made me a capital breakwater, so I was able then to use the baler, and after a very long time, as you may imagine, I got the water all out of my boat. I needn't try to describe my feelings, thoughts of Mary and the ship almost drove me frantic, for I was inclined to believe that the sea that

washed me overboard had burst up the decks, and that the *Star of Hope* had foundered with all hands, long since. The wind moderated towards daylight, so I managed to stick up a bit of a sail with the help of the bottom boards—for there was not an oar or anything else in the boat—and a few cloths of canvas I'd cut out of the mizen-topgallant sail, and as soon as I dared I cast off from the wreckage and sailed away before the wind. The little craft danced along in fine style under the rag of canvas I was able to show. I sailed on all that day without seeing any land, but when the sun rose on the following morning I made out a small island right ahead, to my great joy, for I was getting perfectly ravenous with hunger, and would have given the world for a drink of cold water. I ran the boat ashore on the beach, and, as luck would have it, there was a little gurgling stream close by, finding its way down the sand from the edge of the bushes and trees that were growing a few yards higher up. It was fresh, too, beautiful fresh water, and a draught from its bountiful supply made another man of me. My island was a very tiny one, not more than a quarter of a mile in any direction, but there was plenty of vegetation upon it—cocoa-palms, bananas, plantains, pine-apples, and lots of others that I had never seen or heard of before, so I lived on fruit and shell-fish, and found the diet agreed with me very well. I knew that the island lay pretty near in the track of ships bound from the Colonies to China and Japan; so, to be in a position to make my presence known to the first vessel that came along, I managed to carve out a pair of rough clumsy

oars, and made a decent enough mast and yard for my boat. These took a long time to make, for I had nothing but a pocket knife to work with, and I dare say I was a month over my job. I saw several ships out in the offing during that time, but none came near enough to be of any use to me. However, about a week after I'd finished my oars, a barque came along and lay becalmed within three miles of the island, so I pulled off to her and jumped aboard. She was the *Mayola*, from Yokohama to Sydney, and you may imagine how thankful I was when the captain told me that the *Star of Hope* had arrived there the day before the *Mayola* left. Well, we soon ran down to Sydney, and from there I shipped before the mast for London in the old *Paramatta*. We arrived off Gravesend after a tedious passage of ninety-one days, and the next morning the ship was made fast alongside in the East India Dock basin. The first thing I did, you may be sure, was to hurry up to the office to ask for news of the *Star of Hope*, and there I saw the old managing clerk, who had been managing clerk, at all events, ever since the day I signed my indentures, and heaven only knows for how many years before. Well, he was delighted to see me.

“‘The *Star of Hope* arrived home last Wednesday, and Captain Williams himself was here not more than an hour ago,’ exclaimed he; ‘and we were talking of what we supposed was your sad fate, and now—God bless my soul!—here you are as right as a trivet’; and the worthy old gentleman shook my hand until I thought he was never going to stop. Then he gave me Captain Williams’s

address at Barnsbury, and before long I was knocking at his door.

“‘Yes, sir, he is in,’ said the servant.

“‘Are Mrs. Williams and—and—Miss Mary at home?’

“‘Yes, sir, please step in; what name shall I say?’

“‘Who’s that at the door?’ sang out a well-known voice, and the next moment I was face to face with my old skipper.

“‘Jack Harvey!’ he gasped. ‘Am I dreaming?’

“‘Dreaming! No, sir,—here I am, all alive and hearty and just arrived from Sydney in the *Paramatta*.’

“‘Come in!’ he exclaimed, after giving me a hug that a grizzly bear would scarcely have improved upon, ‘and tell me how you were saved. Here, Steward—Jane, I mean—bring a bottle of wine and some glasses, and tell your mistress and Miss Henderson that there’s a gentleman below who wants to see them.’

“‘Who is it?’ I heard a voice whisper in the hall.

“‘Lawks, me! Miss Mary, I dunno; only a dirty-looking sailor; but the captain’s like a wild thing!’

“Then the door opened, and the next second my darling was clasped to my heart. Well, that’s about all;—Mary and I were married by licence on the very earliest possible day; and when the *Star of Hope* sailed again I went in her as mate. Now open my chest and take out the album. Give it here.—There,” exclaimed Mr. Harvey, opening the book (it opened immediately at the right place), “that’s my wife—bless her heart! Now put the album back and clear out, for I’m going to take a stretch off the land for the rest of the watch.”



CHAPTER XX.

LAND OH!

SANDALWOOD ISLAND—TROPICAL SCENERY AND WHITE PAINT—THE MATE AND HIS MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

WAY—ay—ay—ay—hi—you! Don't—you—hear—the—news—you—sleepers—below—there—eight bells! Show a leg—show a leg!"

Bang! came a boot, aimed at the speaker's head with hearty good-will but with bad direction.

"Bad shot! bad shot!" laughed Baby, for it was he who had been kicking up all this beastly row.

"I say, Tommy, jump out quick, we're quite close to the land, it is so beautiful, and I've been looking at it through the glass; we can see birds flying about in the trees. Oh you won't turn out, eh? we'll soon see about that——" and the next moment he and I were rolling on the deck, a confused mixture of legs, and arms, and blankets.

"Now, you torment, what have you got to say for

yourself?" I gasped, having obtained the mastery, and kneeling on his chest to keep him down.

"I give in! I give in! Don't tickle!"

"Very well—peace then," said I, allowing him to get up.

"What about that coffee?" sang out Edwards, gaping, and leisurely descending from his bunk. "Hurry up now, and see you fill the bread-barge this morning. Look slippy, or I shall have to induce you to quicken your movements with a rope's-end."

I took my own breakfast, consisting of a pot of coffee and two or three biscuits (all the meat was "scaufed" yesterday) on to the fore-castle head, so that I could have a look at the land before eight bells. There was a very slight, and barely perceptible, air from the north-west, to meet which the yards had been braced sharp up on the port tack, and under whose influence our ship was slowly sneaking along. The sun was pouring his rays from a sky of a most intense and beautiful blue, while the face of the sea appeared to quiver and simmer in the heat that was so lavishly bestowed upon it; and, unruffled by the dainty breeze, it reflected the dazzling sunlight as from an expanse of polished glass. A few rain-clouds hung motionless in the radiant atmosphere discharging their contents in an almost impalpable, bluish-grey mist on the face of the waters underneath, blurring its brilliance here and there, and causing the otherwise clearly defined horizon to appear faint and shadowy where it was swept by the falling moisture. Away to windward was the southernmost point of

Sandalwood Island, past which a current—aided by her own motion through the water—was fast setting the ship. The land itself was high, and densely covered with trees right down to the water's edge, and from the point it trended away in a northerly direction, until its undulating and thickly-wooded outline was lost in the far distance. How lovely it looked, to be sure, after the eternal sea and sky ! I was gazing, rapt in admiration, at the variegated tints of the tropical vegetation, and wondering if I could distinguish any cocoa-nut trees, when——

“ Boy ! You boy ! what are you star-gazing at ! Didn't you hear eight bells strike ! *Where's that white paint ?* D—n my rags ! Things have come to a pretty pass now ! ”

I suppose you will know who raved this at me, or need I tell you it was Mr. Harvey ?

“ Roll your sleeves up, and mix it with your hands ” (*it* was a huge can of white paint), “ get hold of the lumps and squeeze them up with your fingers, you'll be a month of Sundays mixing it with that stick. Now fill the men's pots, and take a small brush yourself and tittivate all round the mouldings—in here over the pin-rail—see ? Mind your hair-strokes or I'll have you tarred and feathered. And don't paint yourself from head to foot, paint the woodwork, that's all I want you to do. That's not the way to hold a brush, you're like a monkey projicking about with a tooth-pick ; hold it like this—Here, take it ; I'm not going to do your work for you, and let me see you spill any paint, if it's only as

much as would blind a mosquito, and, by the horrors of war, I'll boil you !”

The mate is very funny and peculiar, but I am getting to understand him little by little. I had scarcely got fairly started with my work before he sang out for me again in that awful voice of his—it always makes me jump, and this time I started so, that a lot of paint flopped out of my pot, and went sprawling along the deck.

“Run aft,” said Edwards, who was lathering away a little farther on ; “I'll wipe it up for you.”

“How did that paint get on the deck ; who spilt it, you or Edwards ?”

“I did, sir,” I replied, expecting nothing short of a sound licking.

“Well, take your knife and scrape it up—by-and-by, not now. I called you to have a look at the land through the glass, take it and get your focus. Fine trees, aren't they ? Those red ones look well, I wonder what they are. Do you know ?” (to Billy Looney who was standing close by.)

“No, indeed I don't, I wegwet to say that I know nothing whatevah of twees ; in fact, I nevah could distinguish the diffewence between the vawious sorts.”

“See, Tommy, there's a canoe !” exclaimed the mate. “There, in a line with that clump of dark trees. Can you make her out ?”

“Yes, sir, quite plainly, there are two men paddling, and they have a sail hoisted ; I suppose they are paddling because there is no wind in there ?”

“Well, there's precious little out here,” laughed Mr.

Harvey, "and what there is appears almost up and down the masts. Now you see why we got the anchors over the bows, and shackled on the cables yesterday. There—you've had a good look, now get on with your work."

"Come here a minute," said Edwards, as I passed him; "bring that small brush of yours and see if you can get in behind there with it, I can't reach it with mine—What did he want you for?"

"Who—the mate?"

"Yes."

"Oh, only to look at the land through the spy-glass."

"My word!" exclaimed Edwards, "I thought he was going to eat you, clothes and all!"

"So did I, by the way he yelled out, but when I got aft he was as pleasant as possible!"

"Ah, that was because the passengers were on the poop, you may thank your lucky stars for that! you'll be sure to get a thrashing, though, sooner or later, won't he, Jack?"

"No doubt about that," answered Gudgeon, who was industriously flap-flapping with a huge brush a little further aft; "all boys at sea are bound to have a sound rub down with a rope's-end once every three months, regular—and in between whiles as well, when they deserve it."

"That's quite true," said Edwards. "By the way, we've just been three months at sea."

"So we have," replied Gudgeon. "Ain't he had his first dose yet?"

"No, that's a pleasure to come."

"You don't mean to say so?" said Jack, gravely. "I never thought about asking, thinking as most likely you'd seen to it when you was living in the ruins there," pointing with his brush in the direction of our shattered berth. "Howsumever, I think——"

"I wants some more paint—fill my pot, boy," said Barrett, coming over from the other side of the deck, where he and two others were slap-dashing away at the bulwarks. "Why, you have been regular loafing, I can see!" he exclaimed. "We've done our fence as far aft as the topmast backstays!"

"Well, you've got a man more your side than us," replied Jack, "and oughter travel along faster. There's only Edwards and me here, for the kid don't count for nothing; 'sides, look how nice we're laying of it on—none of your streakum-strokum—and put on right side out, so it'll dry quick—couldn't be better aboard a man-o'-war."

"Won't the ship look nice when it's all done?" said I, when Barrett had gone off.

"Oh, wonderful handsome; the old man says that he's going to have her put under a glass case in his cabin arter we've finished and everything's dished up to rights."

"Look how you're splashing paint all over the covering board! Now you've dropped your brush! There's a splodge!" exclaimed Edwards.

"Ain't some people got clumsy children?" remarked Gudgeon.

"Please don't make a row, Eddy," said I, "or else

he'll hear you ; I'll wipe it up with a bit of oakum. Besides, the covering boards have to be painted blue, and that'll hide it."

"Hide it ! I'll hide *you*, you scum ! I've a good mind to call the mate. Look out, here he comes ; stand your pot over the mess you've made, and perhaps he won't notice it."

"Haven't you got a straw hat, Tommy ?"

"No, sir, I had three, but they're all overboard ; the last one went yesterday, the mizen-staysail-sheet knocked it off."

"Good job if it had knocked your head off as well ! You'll be getting a sun-stroke, next thing, with nothing to cover up the back of your neck. There's a couple of Panama hats hanging up behind the door in my berth ; go and fetch one and wear it instead of that cap."

When I returned, the mate had got hold of my brush and was painting away in a most energetic manner. I was thankful to see, though, that he hadn't moved the pot while I was away.

"Well, that's more comfortable, isn't it ?"

"Yes, sir, ever so much, thank you ; it is awfully cool and pleasant after my cloth cap. I'll take the brush now, if you please."

"Wait a minute, I'll do as far as the corner there." (Oh, bother you, thought I.) Then he added to my dismay, "Fleet along the pot, I can't reach it."

"Let me dip the brush in for you, sir," said I, in despair.

"I'll dip you in if you don't do as you're told. Oho !

now I see! There's a d—d artful trick! Thought to deceive me, did you! Come here, and I'll knock seven bells out of you!"

Just then, to my great relief, the boatswain, who was repairing a topsail on the poop, came up to ask Mr. Harvey for some information appertaining to round seams and flat seams, butts, bands, and tabling.

"Here, take your brush—and take that as well," said the mate, dabbing it across my face, and walking aft with the boatswain.





CHAPTER XXI.

THE EASTERN PASSAGES.

EARTHQUAKES — THE VOLCANO — A TOWN DESTROYED — RACING A THUNDERSTORM.

WE were ten days in amongst the islands, and it was so fearfully hot all the time that I couldn't muster enough energy even to write up my log. To-day we are out in the open Pacific, clear of all the islands, and the weather, although we are almost on the equator, is nothing like so oppressive as it has been for the last fortnight. I'm tired of islands now. One eventful day, though, requires to be mentioned ; it was when we were passing Flores, the most beautiful, I think, of all the islands. It is volcanic, and some of its grim, scarred peaks rise to a great altitude—Mount Lobitoki, for instance, being some 7,000 feet high, at least it is marked so on the chart. The lower parts of the island are thickly covered with tropical vegetation, though here and there—in charming contrast with the dense foliage—are grassy slopes, like

rivers of radiant green, extending to the water's edge. The whole scene, thrown into relief by the background of towering, rugged mountains, was one of enchanting loveliness.

Just before four o'clock in the afternoon we felt three distinct shocks of earthquake, which made the ship tremble and rock violently, and the sea to heave in troubled commotion; and immediately afterwards, a mountain, far in the interior of the island, suddenly burst into activity, throwing a column of fire and smoke high into the cloudless sky. While we were gazing, the top of the burning mountain was violently split asunder, and the vast masses of rock that had formed its apex came hurtling down its precipitous sides. It was all over in five minutes, and not a vestige of this tremendous convulsion was then visible, except the jagged crest of the riven volcano and the dense cloud of smoke that hung high over the scene of devastation.

"It was 'stand from under' ashore there, when them rocks came bustlin' down this afternoon," remarked Gudgeon, while we were having our tea. "Dessay there's a whole raft of people smashed up!"

"Always is," said Barrett. "Talk about earthquakes, though, I was in one as played havoc sure enough. We was bound from Sinkumpore up to some place to the nor'ard of Yokohama. I forget what 'twas called now—however, that don't matter—and the day before we made the land, we felt a shock of earthquake (there's no mistaking what it is), and pretty soon afterwards three tremendous seas came rolling along. The ship rode

over the first one all right, and made pretty good weather of the second, but she stuck her nose right into the third sea, and away went her jib-boom and fore-topmast, clean as a whistle. Next morning the land was plain in sight, so we stood in, and, going along, a boat came alongside with two boys in her. What they'd got to say was that they'd rowed their captain ashore the day before, and while they was holding on to the jetty waiting for him to come back, the land commenced to rock about and split open in all directions ; then the sea ran right out, carrying the boat with it, and leaving their ship and two or three more that was lying off in the bay, high and dry on the bottom ; that they saw as their boat was swept out. The next thing they knew was that the water rushed in on the land, though, fortunately for them, the boat was too far out to be carried back with the avalanche of returning water. That's all they did know, for they lay down in the bottom of the boat most frightened to death, and thinking the end of the world had come. Glad enough they were to see us coming along when the sun rose that morning.

"Well, we sailed in, and anchored about a mile off the land ; there was no mistaking the place, for we'd been there only two months before, but there wasn't no sign of a town, not a bit ! Where the houses had stood was a beach ; and just about where the governor's house used to be was a great wide creek, and we pulled up it in our boat for quite half a mile. At the top end of it was part of the poop deck of a ship, one end in the water, and the after part jammed between a couple of trees.

That was the only thing we saw belonging to the ships, and as for the town, there wasn't no vestige of it, and to look at the shore you'd think there hadn't been a living soul there for years and years. We lay in the offing best part of the day, firing guns, in case there should be any people escaped up in the woods, but none came down, and I don't believe there was anybody saved but them two boys. They told us there was two English ships, and a Norwegian barque, and a vessel belonging to Melbourne lying there, and——"

"Hands shorten sail!" shouted Featherstone, banging the fore-castle door open.

"What's amiss?" asked several of the men.

"Thunderstorm! a regular snorter, coming down off the mountains."

There wasn't a breath of wind when I got on deck, and the sails hung quite motionless in the stagnant atmosphere. A hasty glance showed me a dense, hurrying, rolling mass of sable clouds, swiftly hiding the land on our port side from view, and spreading rapidly over the water ahead, while far away on our starboard beam, in vivid contrast to the advancing storm, the coast of the island of Timour lay peacefully basking in the rich glow of the evening sunlight.

In a very few minutes everything was clewed up and hauled down excepting the topsails and fore-topmast staysail, and we then went up to make the canvas fast. By this time it was perfectly dark, for the storm-clouds appeared to have spread over and round us in all directions. Water and sky alike were black as ink, and

from the fore-topgallant yard the outline of the ship's hull was barely to be distinguished, though the slightest sound there was distinctly audible, and I heard the captain's voice asking the man at the wheel how the ship was heading, and his reply, as plainly as though I had been standing alongside them. The sails were quickly stowed, and we had scarcely reached the deck, when suddenly the sky overhead seemed to open, a lurid flash of lightning shot forth, and a horrible, crashing roar of thunder instantaneously followed. Then—as if this were the signal for a general onslaught—the blinding lightning flashed in all directions, and the rattling, deafening uproar of the mighty thunder rolled incessantly overhead. There were no intervals, nothing but one blaze of light—one frightful din. Then torrents—cata-racts of rain fell, flooding the decks ankle deep in a few seconds.

“Stand by the topsail-halliards!”

“LET GO!” and the wind burst upon us, heeling the ship almost over on her beam ends. Then it shifted, and caught her flat'aback, and the men flew to the braces—shifted again, right aft, and drove the ship madly along, before its surging fury.

The storm lasted for over an hour; and never, during the whole time, did the flaming lightning, the volleying thunder, the rain and the wild eddying gusts of wind cease for a second. Then gradually it died away, and the clouds drove off to the southward; a fresh breeze sprang up, the moon shone peacefully on the rippling waters, we hoisted our topsails, and—‘That'll do the watch!’

This was not the only thunderstorm we had in the Eastern passages, but it was by far the worst. We had a rather exciting race with one only a few days after. It was in the forenoon, and the ship was dashing along splendidly with a nice crisp breeze on the port beam ; the sky to windward was perfectly cloudless and serene, and the short combing waves seemed to be chasing each other in joyous play under the blazing rays of the midday sun. Away on the lee-bow, though, was an inky bank of clouds, highly charged with electricity, for we could see the trembling lines of the lightning and hear the low muttering of the far distant thunder. Dead against the wind came the storm, and rapidly it neared us, while every minute the rumble of the thunder became more and more distinct. Our own breeze still held, though, freshening if anything, and the *Albatross*, with her royal-masts bending like a fiddler's elbow, fairly flew through the water. Everybody was on deck, standing by to take in the canvas, and all were gazing anxiously at the advancing storm which we had by this time brought on the beam, though its advance-guard of flying vapour was right overhead.

"Hang on, good breeze, five minutes more and we'll give you the cook!"

And it did hang on, sweeping along with a weight that, under her press of canvas, bore the ship down until the hissing foam flew over her lee-rail, and spouts of water came flying up through the scupper-holes.

"Go it, old girl ; bustle along!" exclaimed Mr. Harvey. "I don't want you to walk, and I don't want

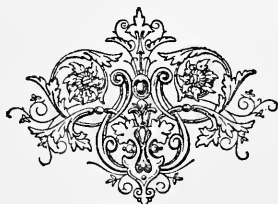
you to run ; but I want you to spread your wings and fly ! ”

Flash !—and a vivid streak zig-zagged athwart the sky. Crash—rattle—crash ! boomed the solemn thunder. Still the captain, who was holding on to the weather-mizen-rigging glancing anxiously aloft, first at his spars, and then at the menacing clouds, showed no sign of taking in the sails. Another flash, farther away this time, and, after a longer interval, another peal of thunder.

Hurrah ! we are drawing away clear of it. It is on our lee-quarter. It is astern !

“ Go below, the starboard-watch, and get your dinners. Lee-fore-brace our side.” For the splendid breeze that carried us past the thunderstorm, had dropped perceptibly, and shifted farther ahead.

So much for the Eastern passages, and I for one am very glad that we are clear of them.





CHAPTER XXII.

WIND AND WATER.

THE CYCLONE—RUNNING FOR IT—BILLY LOONEY HAS A LESSON IN HARPOONING—THE CAPTAIN AND HIS SHOWER-BATH—RETALIATION.

WE had all sorts of weather after passing out of Gillolos traits—calms, head winds, fair winds, and so on for nearly a week, and then, when the *Albatross* was in the latitude of Pelew Islands, a terrific cyclone came along and drove us leagues and leagues out of our course.

It was a lovely morning, clear and fresh, with scarcely a cloud in the sky. There was only just enough wind to keep the sails asleep, and the ship, on an easy bowline, slid quietly through the placid water.

Our watch went below at breakfast time, and after the meal was over I turned into my bunk and lay there reading "Midshipman Easy," which the doctor had lent me. Presently, old Barrett, who had been washing clothes on the forehatch, came into the forecastle, bringing the wet things with him.

"No, I ain't going to hang them up to dry ; least-ways, not now," replied he to somebody ; "and from what I can see there won't be much done in the drying line this good day."

"Why not, Jack ?" asked I.

"Why not?—well I don't know for sartin, my son, sseeing as I'm not supposed to know nothen ; but if there ain't a regular tyfooster coming up hand over fist, then my name isn't Jack Barrett, and I didn't ship in this packet as a able seaman for two pun ten a month."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when I heard Mr. Locke order the royals to be clewed up.

"There you are ; I told you so," said Barrett.

"Oh, shut up, you old croaker!" exclaimed Ross. "You are always hollering about gales of wind coming, like a proper dribbling old loonatic, and saying, 'I told you so!' about things as happens. There was a woman in our town, a farmer's wife, as was always saying that, whenever anything went wrong ; and one day her husband came running into the house.

" ' Mary,' says he, excited like, ' the pig has been and swallowed the grindstone ! ' "

" ' There ! I told you so ; you allus would leave it out in the yard ! ' says she, without thinking of—— "

" Haul down the main-topgallant and royal staysails ! Jib and flying-jib downhauls ! "

"I think it *is* going to blow," remarked Gudgeon. "There was a strange look about the sun when I left the wheel ; looked like he'd took a drop too much over-night, and hadn't got over it yet. Besides, I heard the

mate say the glass was falling, and that don't happen for nothing out hereabouts, I can tell you. What was that order?"

"Haul down the after-staysails, and clew the gaff-topsail up," answered Edwards. "I can feel the breeze is freshening," continued he; "she is lying over to it a bit now; listen to the moaning of the wind! Hark! that is the captain's voice, 'Clew the topgallant-sails up.' We shall be called directly. There's 'In spanker,' as well."

"The sooner they call us the better," said Barrett; "the sooner we start, the——"

"Hands shorten sail! up mainsail!"

How the weather had changed during the first hour of our watch below. When I got on deck, at the call of "All hands," the sky overhead looked quite gloomy and threatening, and all the brightness seemed to have vanished from the face of the ocean, leaving its waters a dull, neutral tint; while the wind, which was steadily increasing, sang a mournful, plaintive cadence as it swept past our rigging.

"Jump aloft and make them sails fast!" sang out the mate, when the mainsail was snugly hauled up (he always says "them" when he's a bit excited); "and stow them well, so they won't blow adrift. Now, you boys, one of you make the gaff-topsail fast, and the other one ride down the spanker—and haul your gaskets taut."

Stealthily, as it were, the wind freshened, and blew harder and harder, until by the time the sails were

stowed it was high time to take more canvas off the ship. Accordingly, both the upper topsails were taken in, and the main-topmast-staysail was hauled down, and then we hauled the foresail up, reefed and stowed it. Still too much sail, so both the lower topsails were clewed up and furled, and the ship was then, under her mizen-staysail and fore-topmast-staysail, hove-to in the midst of a wild, shrieking hurricane and such a raging sea as can scarcely be imagined. It was impossible for any one to stand on the poop without holding on to something. The mate himself was carried fairly off his legs by the wind and dashed against the companion, and the captain threw him the bight of the main-brace, so that he might drag himself back to windward again.

"Mr. Harvey, we must run her," bawled the captain. "The hurricane centre is advancing upon us."

Scarcely had he spoken, when *rip* went the fore-topmast staysail, blown to ribands, and the ship, losing her way, fell off at once, and lay wallowing like a log in the trough of the sea. Away for'ard dashed the mate, and he and the others quickly got a topmast-stunsail and unrolled it in the weather fore-rigging, while three of the hands scrambled aft and hauled down the mizen-staysail. Still she wouldn't go off, but lay there broadside on, with the seas flying right over her lower yards, and her decks all awash. Then the mate and Edwards and two or three more clambered up to the foreyard, and passed a lashing round yard and sail in the slings; they then went and loosed the lee-yardarm, when, freed from the gaskets, the canvas bellied out like a balloon. My

heart was in my mouth with apprehension until I saw them safely in off the yard, for they had to almost fight their way back. The lee-gear was then eased away, and all hands got hold of the fore-sheet and managed to



THE CYCLONE.

drag it down about half-way between the yard and the rail; they couldn't do more than that. However, it payed the ship's head off, and she went away under that bit of canvas like a wild thing.

We ran before it for about six hours, and then the

wind began to shift from south, round easterly, and we knew by that that we were getting out of the track of the cyclone, and that its centre was passing astern.

"Out reef and give her the whole foresail, Mr. Harvey ; loose the lower topsails !"

Patches of blue sky now began to show amongst the flying clouds, and, as the wind had eased a little of its terrific fury, we continued making sail. A new fore-topmast staysail had been bent some time before, so that was hoisted. Then we mastheaded the topsail yards, set the jib and hauled aft the lee-clew of the mainsail.

"Make hay while the sun shines," sang out the skipper. "Give her the main-topgallant-sail !"

Gradually the wind and sea went down, and towards evening we were flying along under all plain sail, with the wind—a nice fresh breeze—on our starboard beam.

The captain and Billy Looney came along for'ard during the second dog-watch, and Billy was carrying the harpoon and a coil of line ; and up they both mounted on the forecastle head where I was hanging out my jacket to dry.

"Now, Mr. Simkins, stand here on the weather side by the cathead, hold the harpoon so—and when you see a porpoise, heave it into him—hard—never mind if you do miss the first, it takes some time to learn how to use a harpoon."

And Billy Looney stood there with his left foot planted well in front, and the harpoon poised in his right hand, waiting for a chance to throw it.

Then the Captain held his hand up, and I, looking aft to see what the signal meant, saw the man at the wheel spinning it round to luff her up.

That was enough for me ; I went off that forecastle head like a shot, and ran aft as far as the galley, and then I turned round to see the fun. There stood Billy Looney, all-unconsciously gazing through his spectacles, anxiously watching for something to flesh his maiden harpoon with, and all the time the ship was flying up into the wind. Poor old Billy—you'll catch some sport presently—thought I.

By-and-by over came a sea and deluged the pair of them. It struck Billy Looney fairly in the chest, knocked him off his legs, and rolled him all across the forecastle. How he coughed and spluttered and gasped ! and how everybody roared with laughter ! He did look rather a comical object as he picked himself up, and it was some little time before he appeared to quite understand what had happened, then he, too, began to laugh.

"Ba—ba—ba—Jove !" gasped he, "I think it was wather injudicious on our part to come on th—th—this place. Hadn't we bettah wetire, Captain Bowes ? I'll come some other day, when it isn't so wuff."

Poor old Billy Looney, it was rather a shame to play him such a trick. He is very good-natured, though, and it doesn't matter a bit what you do or say to him—he takes it all in good part. Everybody likes old Billy.

Somebody told him, or else he found out for himself, that the porpoise-catching expedition and his subse-

quent ducking was a deep-laid scheme of the captain's, and so he pretty soon hit upon a plan for paying him back in his own coin.

There is a shower-bath in the after cabin which the skipper uses every morning, and the tank that supplies it is filled up when the decks are washed; there is a hole in the poop-deck through which the water is poured, and a plug that screws in to close it.

The next morning Billy Looney appeared on deck at an earlier hour than usual, and got me to fetch him the key that unscrews this plug, and then he poured a lot of liquid blacking down into the tank. I promised to say nothing about it, and he promised not to tell how he got the key, so that was all right. When the captain went to get his usual shower-bath, though, it was all wrong for when he pulled the wire that lets the water run—but there, I needn't tell you what happened. I was just calling Mr. Locke when I heard, first the rush of the water, and then the captain's voice raging.

"Oh! (splutter) look at me! (gasp) black as the ace of spades!—if I ain't, d—n me."

"Whatevah is the wow about? Deah me! how vewy wediculous you do look, Captain Bowes!" said old Billy, calmly walking into the after cabin (I couldn't for the life of me help peeping through the saloon door). "Pwaps now if you were to take me for another *harpoon lesson*, all that black stuff might get washed off."

"Oh, it was you, eh," laughed the skipper. "Well, fair play is a jewel, and it is your turn to laugh now."



CHAPTER XXIII.

HONG KONG.

ACROSS THE CHINA SEA—HONG KONG—A RUN ASHORE—CRICKET AND
CLARET-CUP—THE TYPHOON—AN INVITATION.



WHAT are all those lights, sir ? ”

“ Chinese fishing boats, my son ; thick as flies in a cook-shop, too.”

“ I wish it was daylight so that we might have a look at them ! ”

“ So do I, boy,” exclaimed Mr. Harvey, gazing anxiously ahead where several twinkling lights were bobbing about. “ Keep a sharp look out there, for’ard ! ”

“ Ay, ay, sir.”

We were soon threading our way in amongst the fleet of fishing boats, bearing up one minute, luffing the next, and the mate was just saying we’d passed the last one, when a light blazed suddenly up, almost under our bows.

“ Hard down ! let go your head sheets ! ” roared he, and in a second or so we glanced by a large boat, full of

men, women, and children, the whole of them yelling and scrambling about in a high state of frightened confusion.

"What are you projicking about out here without a light for?" raved Mr. Harvey.

"Suppose you no got light, how can my makee look-see,—you d—d lubbers!"

"Keep her away again! 'Twould have served them well right if we'd torn their boat up; another second or two and we should have run right over them—the confounded lunatics. They didn't show their light until we were almost on top of them. The boat would have come undone, I know, if we'd hit her. Carry these glasses for'ard to the look-out, and tell him to take a squint through them now and again, in case there should be any more of the careless ballahoos sculling about—and tell him to keep a good look out for the land.—What land? Why the coast of China, of course, where else do you imagine we are?"

"I didn't think we were so close to it as all that, sir."

"Oh, didn't you! and pray who gave you leave to think anything about it? Off you go with the glasses now, and don't stay for'ard there, yarning with whoever's on the look out; give him your message and come back at once."

"Eddy, these glasses are for you, the mate sent them, and you are to look out for any more fishing boats, and also for the land—it isn't far off, he says."

"Oh, we are far enough off the land yet," replied Edwards. "I dare say we shall see it plain enough,

though, when the sun rises. I hope it's a good forty miles away now."

"Why?"

"Because I want my morning watch below in peace and quietness; I hope we sha'n't be close in with the land before breakfast time."

"Oh! he told you to come back at once, did he; well, why don't you go? your presence is by no means necessary to me. Cross?—I'm not cross, you pitiful—Light on the weather bow, sir!"

"Ay, ay," replied Mr. Harvey's voice from aft. "Keep your eyes open there—I've seen that light some time!"

"What an infernal lie!" muttered Edwards. "Go back on the poop or else he'll be singing out for you."

"Well, Tommy, this will be our last night at sea for this passage—aren't you glad?"

"Yes, sir; when shall we be at Hong Kong?"

"Oh, before dinner time, if all goes well. Here's the captain coming upon deck; go over to leeward, but don't go off the poop, in case I should want you."

* * * * *

"Now then, young Davie, turn out; come and see China."

"Is it in sight, Baby?"

"Oh, it's been in sight since sunrise, and we're quite close in now; come along, it isn't seven bells yet, but it will be in about ten minutes. We've been signalling our name to the people on the top of the hill, and there's a Chinese pilot on board."

"Is there?" I exclaimed, turning out in a hurry.

"Yes, and he's no end of a swell, too, I can tell you ; I asked him just now how he was, and he said, 'Belly well—go 'way boy!' and looked as though he thought it was beastly cheek for me to have dared to speak to him. Fancy, a rotten old Chinaman!"

"There, that's Hong Kong, Tonmy," said the boat-swain, when I got on deck ; "least, it's Hong Kong Island, the town is round on the other side—we shall open it out directly. That's Victoria Peak—up there where the flagstaff is. See the junks—rum crafts, ain't they? They've all got eyes painted on their bows ; John Chinaman says, 'No got eye, how can see rock?' Them things do sail, though. Look at that fellow coming booming along there by the point—regular foaming through the water. Now you can see his eyes plain enough. The little boats with the white sails are sampans. There's seven bells. We're all going to breakfast together this morning—both watches."

Presently the mate came bustling along.

"Get your breakfasts as quick as you can, men," said he, "and see all clear for shortening sail. There 'll be plenty of eyes looking at us directly."

"All right, sir, we'll tie her up smart, so they'll think it's one of these here men-o'-war a-comin' in," said Barrett—after Mr. Harvey had gone, though.

There wasn't much wind, and we slowly crept into the anchorage, opening out first the ships and then the white clustering houses of the town.

Crowds of flitting sampans were darting about in all directions. A ship just ahead of us was getting under

way, and the rousing chorus of her crew, as they hove round the capstan, came, not unmusically, over the water.

A huge P. and O. steamer, with a whole fleet of sampans and junks swarming round her, was slowly gliding through the anchorage; and then, as an additional charm to the animated scene, the band on board the flagship struck up "God save the Queen," as eight o'clock struck, and the colours were hoisted on board the half-dozen or so war-ships that lay at the head of the harbour.

"Stand by the starboard anchor!"

"All clear, sir." "Let go!"

Bang! came the carpenter's maul, and down plunged the anchor, rattling the cable tumultuously out of the hawse pipe.

"That makes a job for all hands," remarked Gudgeon.

* * * * *

"I'm going ashore after dinner," said Captain Bowes to me the day after we arrived; "would you like to come with me?—Oh, you'd be delighted, eh?—Very well. Oh yes, Baby may come too, of course; so trot off and get yourselves ready; my sampan will be alongside at one o'clock."

"I'm going up to the consignee's," said the captain when we got out at the landing steps, "so you can stroll about until six o'clock, but mind you are back here at that time. Go up any of those streets, they all lead into Queen's Road; walk along there, and then you can come back this way, along the esplanade, it is called the Praya, and see you don't get into trouble; can I trust

you?—Very well, don't go into the public-houses—they sell vile stuff—and don't get amongst the girls. Good-bye. Six o'clock, remember, at these steps."

"This is Queen's Road, then—why it's like England! shops with plate-glass fronts and brick houses."

"The people are different, though," replied Baby. "Just look at that Chinese policeman—doesn't he look fat and happy? I should like to have a ride in a chair with two men to carry me, don't they trot along?"

"Hi! you boy!—young gem'en—takee likeniss. Number one potoglaf, my can takee you ploper fashion, one doz'n—two dollar. Can do?"

"No wantchee, John," said I. (Oh, we are quite swells at pigeon-English already.)

"Ah, you no talkee ploper! Pletty facee makee han'-som potoglaf. You takee my car', bi'mby come back."

"Come on," said Baby, pulling me off by the arm.

We took his card—here it is—and walked on.

街	HUNG QU A,	舖
市	MARINE, SHIP, PORTRAIT PAINTER,	在
對	PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTIST	香
面	AND DACUERREOTY COPIER.	港
樓	TERMS MODERATE.	中
上	No. 70. QUEEN'S ROAD, Up-tairs. HONGKONG.	環
	館相影畫洋昌仁	

Presently we were accosted by a tall American seaman who had been drinking freely, as we could plainly see—and smell.

“Wal, my true-blooded Britishers,” said he, “yew sim to be enjoying *yourselves*, and havin’ a high old time of it, that I *du* allow. Come into the ‘Stag’ and take a drink—I’ll shout. You don’t drink!” exclaimed he, taking a pace backwards and gazing solemnly at us. “Wal, I guess that’s suthin’ new, anyway. So long, then—here, take some cigars, you’ll find they’re the right sort. Go’-bye, God bless ye. I’m goin’ on the bust.”

“I should like some beer, Baby.”

“So should I, but where can we get any? I’ve never been in a public-house in my life.”

“No more have I, but there’s a swagger place over there—the Hong Kong Hotel—let’s go in and have a bottle of Bass.”

“Isn’t it delicious? Let’s have another.”

“No, not now, old boy; we’ll come back by-and-by.”

“What a long road this is! We are pretty nearly at the end of it now. By Jove! here’s a cricket-field, and some fellows playing. I should just like a game. Look out, here comes the ball; shy it back.”

By-and-by a pleasant-looking and rather elderly gentleman came over to us, while we were standing by the gate watching and criticising the play, and asked us to come in, so of course we thanked him and entered the field.

“Do you play cricket?” said he, as we walked along.

“Oh, that’s capital, we are just going to toss for sides, and we shall be delighted if you will join us. Sailors are generally good cricketers, and last week the officers of Her Majesty’s ship *Challenger* gave us a most confounded licking. I am Major Anderson, of the Royal Artillery. You must tell me your names and I will introduce you to these gentlemen, who are of the same persuasion as myself.

“Charles Courtney Dawson!” exclaimed he, on hearing Baby’s name. “Can it be that you are related to my dear old college chum, Reginald, of that ilk? Your father! why, my dear boy, I’m—I’m delighted to see you—and your friend too. God bless my soul! now isn’t this strange?” and so forth.

“What do you call your friend—Daisy?”

“Oh,” said Baby, laughing, “the sailors call us Buttercup and Daisy, and I’m so used to it that I forgot.”

“So, Master Buttercup, you are on my side, and little Daisy is for our opponents,” exclaimed the Major, after sides had been picked. “We are to bat, thank goodness.”

“Take mid-on, please,” said the captain of our side. “Can you bowl? Oh, that’s splendid, we are awfully short of bowlers. I’ll put you on at the first change.”

Major Anderson and a Captain somebody were the first to bat, and they knocked the bowling all over the field, until at last the Major drove a ball hard right into my hands. It was a hot catch, but I held it, and threw

the ball up amidst loud applause and shouts of "Caught indeed, sir!" How natural it sounded!

Then I was put on to bowl—which was just what I wanted—and in my first over I got two wickets, both clean bowled.

Then Baby came in, and he drove the first ball I gave him for two, and off the second ball of my next over the little beast made a beautiful late cut for four; as for the other bowler, he simply slogged him right and left, and it was such fun.

We were only playing nine a side, and at last the innings closed for eighty-two—Baby carrying out his bat, with a score of twenty-five to his credit. I took five wickets—pretty good, wasn't it?

Then we went to the tent and had claret cup and cigarettes; I smoked a cigarette, but Baby wouldn't.

They were so jolly—the officers, I mean—and, when Major Anderson sang out "Boy!" I promptly answered "Yes, sir," without thinking—being so used to the wretched word. That made them all laugh, and the Major said, "Is that the way they talk to you on your ship? I shouldn't answer them, if I were you."

"Oh, wouldn't you," thought I; "I back you would, though."

And then they explained that "Boy" with them referred to the Chinaman who was ladling out the claret cup, and that, moreover, all Chinese servants are called "Boys." This particular one was at least sixty years old, so it struck me as being rather odd. I was beastly annoyed, though.

"Your mate must be a very horrible person," said the captain of our side—Captain Jolliffe.

"Oh, indeed he's not!" I exclaimed. "He's an awfully nice man, and I like him very much indeed, though he does rave at me sometimes. I can tell directly, by the way he sings out, though, what sort of a humour he is in. If he yells 'Boy!' it means drop everything and fly. 'Boy Tommy!' is milder, but when he is in a good temper it is 'Tommy, Boy!'"

"Well, I shouldn't like it."

"We didn't like it at first, it sounded so dreadful, but we are learning to be sailors, you know, and, after all, the mate is so kind, and he is such a splendid seaman—I don't care much what he calls me."

"Well, well, he has got a doughty little champion, at any rate," laughed the Major. "Quite right—always stick up for your shipmates, my boy. Now let us go out and field. Send your men in, please."

By-and-by it came to my turn to go in, and off the first ball I received I made a drive all along the grass to the off for three, and then it was "over." The very next ball, though, brought my career to an untimely end. It came along to leg, I swung round at it, and away went the ball flying to the fence, but then you see the ground was very slippery, and I hadn't any spikes, and as the ball left my bat, my foot slipped, and I fell gracefully into the wicket.

"Never mind, little man," laughed the Major—who was keeping wicket—as he stuck the stumps up again. "That wasn't your fault—try again."

"Oh, no, thanks," said I. "I'm out fairly enough."

I was vexed, though, but of course I walked off to the tent, and was consoled with, and had more claret cup, and do you know, between ourselves, I began to get talkative, and when the innings was over—we lost by two or three runs—I was yarning away in high glee about the ship, and all connected with her, laughing and going on anyhow, much to poor Baby's dismay; he stopped short at the entrance to the tent and looked quite horrified.

"Come on, old boy!" I exclaimed. "Isn't this jolly! couldn't be better on board a man-o'-war. Ha! ha! Never mind the old skipper, let him wait for us, he be d—d (!) Why, there are two Babies, now! Twins, aren't you? Ha! ha! Nevsaydie—whilethereshotinlocker. Donlaugh'tmeplease!"

"No, you aren't to drink any more cup," said Major Anderson—who on entering the tent had seen that I was rapidly getting intoxicated—and taking away my glass. "You shouldn't have given it to him."

"Why, hang it, he's only had two glasses!" replied Captain Jolliffe. "I had no idea it would have affected him so."

"Well, he's not used to it, you know. Come with me, and let us take a walk round the field; come along and take my arm. There now, the fresh air will soon pull you round. Oh, don't cry! these little accidents will occur to the best of us at times. Forgive you! we've nothing to forgive you for, my dear boy; in fact, it is all our fault, we ought to have told you that there is

generally a lot of brandy in the cup, perhaps to-day there was more than usual."

"Please—don't—think—I'm—a tipsy wretch," sobbed I; "you will—I know."

"Nonsense, boy; come, cheer up! was ever there such a piteous little face! Now you are getting all right again, let us go back to the tent and you shall have a wash, that will bring the roses back to those cheeks. Be a man! sailors are always men, you know."

"Oh, I *daren't* go back to the tent, I am so ashamed of myself, please send Baby out and let us go."

"Stuff and nonsense! we aren't going to part with you like that; you needn't be ashamed, my boy—at least of seeing the other fellows; I'm more afraid that they'll rather compliment you, and try and make you feel that you've done something to be proud of. One word before we get to the tent. I am an old man, and you are but a child. Listen, then, to a word of friendly advice. Remember the way you got out this afternoon, your foot slipped, you stumbled, and—your wicket was down. My dear boy, the field of life is treacherous, and very, very slippery. *Always wear your spikes.* I see you understand my meaning, and now, here we are, back again."

"And so you have to be back at the landing-steps at six o'clock; don't you think we might prevail upon your captain to let you dine with us this evening? You wouldn't like to ask him? then I think I must walk down with you and try my powers of persuasion upon this most awe-inspiring personage. Come along, we haven't too much time."

“Here we are on the Praya again, isn’t it a splendid promenade? See, it sweeps along the water front, the whole way from here to where you landed. Ay, the scene is very beautiful—calm and placid—and the reflected glow of the sunset on the hills is charming. The ships, too, how quietly they lie on the sleeping water; and yet, in three months time where will they all be! scattered to the four corners of this world of ours. Ah! it was just such an evening as this, some four months since, and yet on the morrow when the sun rose, how awful, how horrible was the aspect. For a frightful typhoon came on in the night, and of all the ships that the day before lay out there in the anchorage, scarce half a dozen remained, and they, dismasted and tempest-torn, were signalling for help. Many sank at their moorings—many more were driven helter-skelter out to sea, and were never heard of again. Several had been hurled upon Green Island and smashed to pieces, and one, luckier than the rest, was blown bodily ashore in the Chinese quarter, where she lay, bolt upright, with her flying-jib-boom stuck through a house.

“One of the huge Pacific steamers, though she had all her anchors down, and was kept steaming full speed ahead in the teeth of the hurricane, dragged almost down to the point there. And now, look over the wall, there lie two of the wrecks—they haven’t been removed yet. This, with part of her deck above water, and so close that you could easily jump aboard, was a large steamer that was to have sailed the next morning; she had two hundred and fifty coolies on board, besides her crew, and

every soul perished. The other was a Russian barque. She, too, was driven headlong from her anchors and dashed against the wall—there is the breach she made, it is but now being rebuilt. Every one aboard was drowned. As for the native craft, no one will ever know how many were destroyed, or how many Chinese were drowned. Nearly every sampan contains a whole family ; they eat, drink, sleep, live and die under those round mat coverings, and of course the loss of life was fearful.

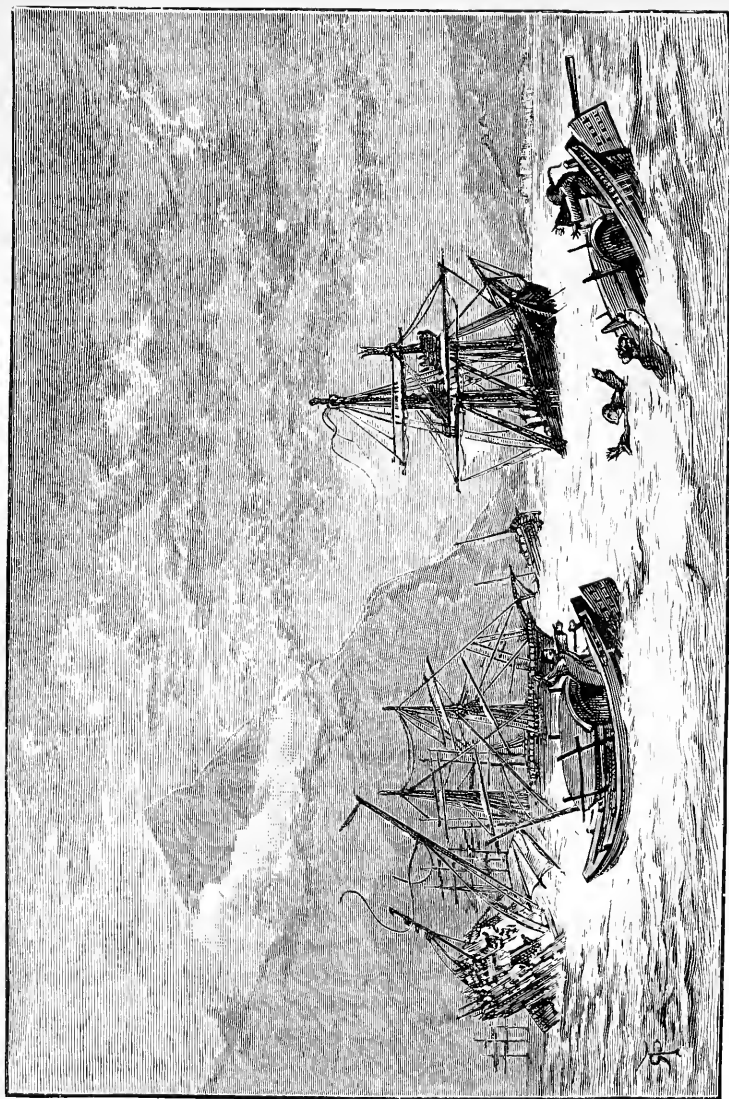
“The place was strewn with wreckage—houses ashore were blown down, and, in fact, it was one scene of devastation and destruction whichever way one looked.

“So that is your ship—the one with the main-skysail-mast (you see I am quite nautical) ; she is very graceful and pretty, I must say.”

“Oh, isn’t she !” exclaimed Baby and I simultaneously. “She is the most beautiful of all.”

“Very well, we will admit that,” replied Major Anderson, smiling at our enthusiasm. “Especially as there is no one present interested in any of the other ships to contradict us.”

“Ah, but the *Albatross* is a tea-clipper,” said I, proudly. “See how much loftier she is than any of the others, she is like a yacht compared with them. How beautifully her yards are squared, too ; why the mate and the boatswain almost came to blows over the main yard ; one said it was a leetle to port, and the other declared it was a hair’s-breadth to starboard, and I was sent up with a ball of spunyarn to measure from each



THE TYPHOON AT HONG KONG.



ward-arm to the rail, and there wasn't an inch of difference one way or the other !”

“Sailors are rum 'uns,” laughed the Major ; “what could it matter, even supposing it *was* tipped up a bit at one end !”

“Ah, you are only a soldier, and don't understand these things,” said I, with a grin.

“Very well, my ancient mariner, I bow to your superior knowledge and long experience.”

And so, laughing and joking, we strolled along until we reached the landing steps.

“Now, where is this formidable captain of yours ? not turned up yet, I suppose ? Well, it's only just six o'clock, and no doubt a man of his exalted position will not be punctual.”

Presently, however, the captain came along, looking so happy, with his jolly old face the colour of a beetroot.

“I'm delighted to see you, Major Anderson !” exclaimed he, after the usual formalities. “So you've been taking care of my boys. They're a precious pair of humbugs, aren't they ? ha, ha ! Both present, and both sober—more'n I expected, I must say, ha, ha ! Playing cricket, eh ? Been more used to dodging Pompey round the foremast lately, I'll swear. Dine with you ! of course they may, only let them be aboard by—what shall we say—ten o'clock ? Very well, half-past-then, but don't be later, and will you send them off in your own boat, please ?”

“Oh, certainly, Captain Bowes ; and we'll take great care of them.”

“You’d better !” laughed the skipper. “And now I hope you’ll come off and have a look at the little packet before we leave. Glad to see you aboard at any time. Don’t forget, I shall be disappointed if you don’t come—and—thanks for your kindness to the youngsters.”

Oh, what a jolly evening we had ! The officers were all in uniform, of course, and Major Anderson had four medals and the Victoria Cross ! Mustn’t he be brave ! After dinner we had singing. One of the young officers had a banjo, and he played it ever so much better than the cook, though certainly it was a much better banjo than the cook’s. It was all silver at the round part, and perhaps that had something to do with it. Then they asked us to sing, and Baby sang one of his lovely songs—it *is* nice to hear him—and afterwards they wanted me to sing, but I can’t, you know—not a bit. But I told them I could dance a little, so they sent for the fifer and cleared the table, and put me on it, and I danced the sailor’s hornpipe. They liked it, too, and kept me at it until I was tired.





CHAPTER XXIV.

AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

FORECASTLE CHAFF—A BUCKET OF CHAMPAGNE AND ITS RESULTS—
THE GOLD DIGGINGS—ADVENTURES UP COUNTRY—BUSHRANGERS
—A FEARFUL REVENGE.

IT took a lot of calling and shaking to wake me up the next morning at half-past five. Fancy turning out at that fiendish hour after spending such a jolly evening! Edwards called me, and of course I was wide awake, and going to turn out immediately—oh, certainly. So I went fast asleep again at once, and dreamt I got out and put on my things, and was calmly walking aft along the main-deck, when the ship was violently shaken—I thought it was an earthquake—how she rocked! and the masts and yards came toppling down from aloft, and—“I’m awake now, Edwards! I am really! Oh! Don’t bang me about! MUR-DER!”

“Billy Looney and the doctor were aboard yesterday, while you were projicking about ashore with your grand soldier friends,” said the mate, coming up to us as we

were assiduously rubbing away at the brass-work on the poop.

"They're going up to Canton to-day, so now you won't have a chance to bid them good-bye."

"I'm so sorry we didn't see them," said I, regretfully, "especially the doctor. Perhaps they'll be back before we leave Hong Kong."

"Not much chance of that," replied Mr. Harvey. "We shall be out of this next week. The ship's going round to Foochow in ballast. Most of the cargo's out of her now, and as soon as the main-hatch is clear we shall start getting the ballast in."

"Then our house can't be mended in time?"

"No, it's to be repaired in Foochow; but you aren't to live in it again this voyage. We are going to stow the sails in your menagerie, and fill the sail-locker with tea; Edwards and Featherstone don't object, and of course no one will ask for *your* opinion. There, that will do—put away your oil-rags and garbage; I see you've spun the job out splendidly so as to make it just last to breakfast-time."

"We regret that the repast this morning should be of so humble a description—don't we, Gudgeon?" said Edwards, as I was hacking off a lump of meat with my jack-knife. "How hard it must be to have to descend to cold buffalo and biscuits after feasting on the fat of the land!"

"How did you leave my Lord Muck and General Dunkunfus Macgreggory? Well and hearty, I hope," said Gudgeon.

"Pity they didn't 'list the both of them boys," observed Barrett. "They'd look well in hemlets and them pipe-clayed crojack-rove belts as sojers wears."

"D—d sight too high and mighty to be eating their grub with the likes of us," said another.

"Watchmate before a shipmate ; shipmate before a friend ; friend before a stranger ; stranger before a dog ; but a dog before a sojer !" observed Gudgeon. "So I allow as how them as mixes theirselves up in sojers' company don't belong my pigeon anyway, and ain't good enough to eat their breakfast here in this ship's forecastle."

"More they ain't," replied Barrett. "They came off drunk, too—drunk as two flies. See where they'd hove their go-ashore clothes ! all over the deck—boots here, pants there, a shirt and a pair of socks in the beef kid."

"Oh, we weren't !—what rot ! We only had a glass of champagne each at dinner, and afterwards we had negus and nothing else !"

"Negus ! what's that ? only another name for Scotch whiskey, I know."

"I never tasted no shampain," said Barrett.

"I did once," said Rocky ; "I know what like it is—rattling good stuff. I was down in the ship's hold—let's see, where was it—out in Sydney, I think—and we saw a case among the cargo as was leaking ; so we opened it—me and two more—and there was twelve bottles of this here shampain in it. One was broke, so we saved some of the stuff and drunk it, and then we couldn't help knocking the neck off another bottle, and that

went too. 'May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb,' said I ; so we passed a bucket down from on deck and emptied the other bottles into it, and then we wrapped them up in the straw again and nailed down the case and put it back. Nobody knew anything about it but ourselves, and we went up in the fore-castle and sat round the bucket, and drunk the wine out of a pannikin ; there was one each all round."

"Serve you right if you'd been found out and sent to gaol for broaching cargo," laughed one of the star-board watch.

"Well," replied Rocky, modestly, "I did go to gaol over that job—not through being found out, but the shampain got into my head, and I refused duty, and got six weeks in chokey for my pains. When I came out I picked up a pal—a chap as had run from one of the ships in the harbour—and we two went off to the diggin's—walked there,—only two hundred and forty miles, that's all ! We stayed there until the rush got played out, and then my chum went off farther up the country to another rush. I'd had enough of it, though, so I bought a horse and rode back to Sydney. I had nearly two hundred pounds' worth of gold, and that lasted me about a week, and when it was gone I shipped in a barque bound for 'Frisco. That was a passage, too—only ninety-four days ! nothing but head winds and calms all the time. Why, we was over seventy days on one tack ! It's true ! and coming back they ran her on a coral reef, somewhere in the middle of the Pacific—I believe 'twas done on purpose—and there we left her,

and took to the boats, and made for Otaheite. We arrived there all right after about a week, though we had nothing to eat and no water to drink for the last three days ; however, the English Consul looked out for us all right when we got in, and we lived there a fortnight. The other two boats never arrived, though, and whether they was picked up, or what become of them, I never heard. The missionary ship came in then and wanted hands—seeing as the savages had killed and eat one boat's crew, missionary and all, a week or so previous—and so we shipped in her. I didn't want to go, not after what I'd heard of them packets, but you see the consul made us take the first ship that came along. As good luck would have it, she was bound to Melbourne to pick up Brother So-and-So, who was coming out from England ; and when we got there I left her. There was too much piety, and too little provisions—leastways for us chaps for'ard. Then I went to Geelong, and got a job in a bakehouse, making bread. I got kicked out of that for burning a whole batch of bread I'd been set to watch ; so afterwards I started up the country and went farming, and when I got tired of that I got a job in a store, selling tea and sugar and candles to a parcel of old women and children. The d—d place caught alight one night, and I just managed to get out by the skin of my teeth, and that's all. There was some gunpowder in the shop, and in about a minute after I dropped out of the window, up went the whole shoot—Bang ! Then I started back for Melbourne—on foot, of course—and by-and-by I came to a river called the Murray, and had to get

across it somehow, but it was so swelled by the rains that I was in two minds whether I'd risk swimming it or not ; however, in I went, and the current was worse than I thought for. It dashed me about like a bit of stick, and I should have been drowned, safe enough, if I hadn't managed to lay hold of a big log as came floating along. I crawled upon the log, and there I was, going down the river at the rate of knots, with my ship swirling about in the racing current, turning over sometimes, me and all. You would have laughed to have seen me crawling out from underneath every time she turned turtle—and 'twas often enough too. By-and-by my log got into an eddy, and that carried it pretty close to the other bank, so I left it and swam ashore. Night was coming on then, and I was in a pretty fine mess—parish-rigged and poverty-struck, sure enough ; I'd only got a shirt and a pair of pants to my name—no boots nor nothing. Anyway 'twas no use stopping there, so I trudged off, and before long I heard a 'Coo—eh!' I answered it, you may lay, and presently along came a horse galloping like fury ; so I 'coo—ched' again, and up dashed a horseman, fetching his nag up with a round turn when he saw me.

"'Hands up! Who are you?' he shouted, pointing a revolver straight at my head.

"Up went my hands—sharp, for I knew what that meant well enough ; so do most people who've heard tell of bushrangers.

"'Put down your pistol, brother,' I said ; 'I've been in the river for the last two hours, outward-bound on a

schooner-rigged log. Shoot and be d—d to you, though, if it takes your fancy,' says I ; 'I don't care much one way or the other. It's pretty near dead low-water with me now, and I don't value my life at a rope-yeen.'

" 'Jack Ross—by the holy scissors !'

" 'That's me,' says I. He was off his horse the next second, and shaking my hand like he'd shake it off. It was Tom Paterson, the man I went to the diggin's with.

" 'Give us a drink of rum, or something, Tom,' says I, 'for I'm half-drowned, and ain't had nothing past my lips, 'cept muddy water, since yesterday morning !'

" 'Here you are, old chum,' says he, hauling out his flask. 'And now jump up behind me, and hold on tight ; we'll soon be where there's rashons and a good fire, and friends to make you welcome.'

" 'On the same lay as yourself, Tom ?'

" 'Ay, bushranging,' says he ; 'better'n hauling out to leeward, ain't it ?'

" 'Very likely,' says I.

" Well, we wasn't long getting to the place where his chums were camped out, and there I had some hot tea and dampers and roasted kangaroo, and stowed away a good square meal—for I was 'most famished, that *is* a fact. And afterwards we lay round the fire smoking and yarning, and the Captain—Kelly was his name—told us as how the last time he was in this part of the country he was captured by the police, through the landlord of the place he was staying at giving information so as to get the reward.

" So in the night the police came and secured him,

and took him away, with his hands made fast behind his back with a bit of rope. They stopped at a place on the road to get their breakfast, and left Kelly in an inside room, first making his legs fast as well. And while they were at breakfast he managed to drag himself across the floor over to the fire, and he held his hands in the flame until the rope was burnt through!—there was ‘pluck for you!’—and then he cast his feet adrift, and got out of the window and mounted one of the policemen’s horses, first disabling the gear of the other horses so they couldn’t give chase for awhile; and so he got clear off, and galloped straight back to where he was caught. The landlord came to the door when he heard the horse’s hoofs outside, and when he saw who was there he fell on his knees and prayed for mercy.

“‘You traitor,’ shouted Kelly, pulling a revolver out of the holster and glancing at a clock that was over the door; ‘one minute to say your prayers, and then I’ll shoot you like a dog!’

“He did too—shot him right through the head when the time was up, and then galloped off.

“I went to sleep when Kelly finished this yarn, and next morning when I roused out they’d got their horses all ready saddled, and was just going off on whatever errand they had in view. So I said good-bye to Tom and all of them, and the captain put me in the road to a friend of his who had a place about nine miles off. I made tracks for the house, and when I got there the man—a farmer—treated me very kindly; next day a

waggon came along, and I got a free passage down to Melbourne in it. There I met the captain of the ship I left in Sydney—that time when I got the six weeks in gaol for refusing duty.

“‘Well, Ross,’ says he, ‘are you cured of your lazy fit now?’

“‘That I am, sir,’ says I.

“‘Are you looking for a ship?’

“‘Yes, sir.’

“‘All right, come with me, then.’

“Two days after that I was at sea once more, homeward-bound to London.”

“Turn to! Turn to, there!” shouted Mr. Locke, putting a stop to Rocky’s reminiscences.

I am glad, though, that he had time to tell his adventures so far without being disturbed—aren’t you?





CHAPTER XXV.

CHINA.

MOPIN-KITI !—CHIN-CHIN FOR JOSS—VISITORS ON BOARD—MAJOR JOLLIFFE—CHARGE OF THE NAVAL BRIGADE—SAVING THE GUNS—BRITISH SEAMEN—THE CAPTAIN'S OPINIONS ON DIVERS MATTERS.

WHAT does that small beast mean by yelling 'Mopin-kiti ! Mopin-kiti !' at us ? ”
“ I don't know,” answered Baby, to whom I had put this question as we were leaning over the side, one day after dinner, looking at a small junk which had just been made fast alongside.

A little Chinese boy was peeping at us through the half-open doorway that led probably to the captain's cabin, or whatever they call it, and every now and again he would poke his head out and make faces at us, and scream “ Mopin-kiti,” in a most offensive manner.

“ Do you know, Edwards ? ”

“ Know what ? ”

“ Why, Mopin-kiti—what does that mean ? Here is a kid who has done nothing but rave that at us for the last five minutes. There—listen ! ”

"Oh," laughed Edwards, "he means that you are a disgrace to any civilized community, because you don't shave your head and wear a pigtail. Take him a couple of biscuits, and see how soon he'll alter his tune."

"Lilley boy, wantchee chow-chow?" said I, clambering down to the deck of the junk and holding out a biscuit.

"Chow-chow," replied he, reaching for it, but at the same time keeping an eye on the door in readiness for instant flight if necessary.

A Chinaman—who was busily engaged on deck a little farther aft in the cooking of a huge boiler full of rice, which was steaming away over a charcoal fire, and was probably intended for the mid-day meal of all hands—said something to the urchin, who then, apparently satisfied that I didn't mean to eat him, came up and took the biscuits.

"You makee look see Joss?" said the man, leaving his rice and pointing to the door.

"Yes, please," said I.

"Go down-side makee man-man ¹ lilley while."

So I went into the cabin to wait until the rice was cooked. What a fine place it was, too, even in such an affair as this common junk! The floor, sides, and ceiling were all of some hard wood, polished until the surface shone like glass; and there was carving all over the place wherever it was possible to have any. The youngster was lying on a mat chewing away at a biscuit when I entered, and he didn't take the slightest

¹ Wait.

notice of my presence, but rolled about on his mat, jabbering away to himself in an undertone all the while I was waiting. Presently the man came in, and uttering the word "Joss," went and lifted some of the floor at the after-end of the cabin, and beckoned me to come and look. Underneath was a sort of miniature altar with candles burning before it, and grotesquely carved images, lots of them, and (I suppose) artificial flowers festooned all round.

"Dat Joss," said the man. "Him number one Joss—Chineeman muchee makee pray. If him say 'Wind'—den plenty wind come. If 'No wind'—den no got wind. Suppose you wantchee wind when wind no got—makee pray Joss. If wind not come—Maskee! By-and-by plenty come. You likee ginger?" said he, closing the floor again. "Takee one piecee jar; he number one chow-chow." And with that he fetched a large jar of preserved ginger out of a recess and gave it to me.

Major Anderson and several of the other officers came aboard on Sunday afternoon. I am very thankful that they didn't come on any other day; and indeed I was in dread that the captain's invitation would have brought them at some time when their visit would have been highly inconvenient from our point of view. Perhaps they knew very well that week-days are work-days aboard a ship, and timed their visit accordingly.

"Tommy, your friends are coming off," said the captain—who was pacing the starboard side of the poop-deck, puffing away at a cigar—stopping as he spoke,

and taking off his cap to the occupants of a boat whose sails were quickly gliding past our quarter. "Go and receive them at the gangway."

The boat came flying along, and, shooting up under our stern, was soon lying head to wind alongside the accommodation-ladder, where she was left in charge of the identical "boy" who had been presiding over that fatal claret-cup in the cricket-field; and then the Major, Captain Jolliffe, and the others came aboard.

"Here I am, Captain Bowes, availing myself of your kind invitation. I've taken the liberty of bringing a few of my brother officers too—I hope you don't mind. Fact is we are all anxious to have a closer view of the smartest-looking ship in the anchorage, and so——"

"Delighted to see you aboard the *Albatross*, gentlemen," exclaimed the skipper, fairly beaming with pleasure at the compliment so dexterously paid to the ship, and, with pardonable pride, pausing to take a comprehensive glance at the natty little vessel—from the snow-white decks, upon which the ropes were carefully "flemished" down, to the towering fabric of masts and rigging overhead—every rope in its place and hauled taut, every sail neatly furled in a harbour-stow—until, finally, his gaze rested on the graceful blue-and-white burgee which was lazily floating from the gilded truck at our main-skysail-masthead.

"Ay, she's no disgrace—no disgrace, gentlemen. She's a ship a man may well be proud of and take a pride in. And as for sailing—there's nothing afloat can touch her. Stands up to her canvas like a church, and

she's the sweetest little sea-boat I ever set foot in. She'll do everything but talk," &c., &c., &c. Once set the old man off on the subject of his ship, and there's no holding him.

Then, by-and-by, the whole party went below, and Baby and I—who remained on deck, of course—heard them talking and laughing like so many schoolboys, while the frequent popping of corks told us that the skipper was dispensing his hospitality in a most liberal fashion.

Presently the steward called us down to the saloon, and we had a glass of wine apiece. Major Anderson was talking when we arrived, so we sat down at the table and listened, in obedience to a signal from Captain Bowes to that effect.

"I have a great liking and respect for seamen," continued the Major, after we had filled our glasses; "and indeed I owe my life to a party of the Naval Brigade, so it isn't to be wondered at.

"It was during the Mutiny, a few days before the storming of Lucknow in fact; and I, though I was but a lieutenant at the time, had charge of a battery of flying artillery on the extreme right of our army, which was advancing slowly in the face of a heavy fusillade from the sepoys, who were stubbornly contesting every foot of our progress.

"We had been pounding away since early dawn, doing our best to clear the scrub of the almost invisible enemy; and, as usual in that sort of warfare, our loss had been very heavy.

“Suddenly—and as we were about to move off to an eminence on our left, which would have commanded a large range of country—a withering rifle fire burst out from a strong party of the rebels who had managed to steal round on our right flank, and horses and men fell in heaps round the guns. Our supports, too, were not to be seen, and I was about to order the guns to be spiked, and commence a retreat, with my few surviving men upon the main body—though with scarcely the faintest chance of reaching it—when up dashed a party of blue-jackets in charge of a petty officer—for their captain had been recently killed, as I learnt afterwards.

“‘We’ll clear them out for you, sir!’ shouted their leader.

“‘Hold on, Bill! let’s haul off our shoes!’ sang out several of the men.

“And they actually squatted down and took off their shoes, though the bullets were ping-pinging around in all directions.

“I offered to lead them against the sepoys, but ‘No, no,’ shouted they; ‘let us go to work our own way. Stop and look after your guns, and look after ours too—we don’t want them.’

“And so saying, they slung their rifles down and dashed off, cutlass in hand, like a whirlwind, and charged down on the enemy, laughing and cheering as though it was the greatest fun imaginable.

“Gad! it was a fine sight—the way those gallant, dare-devil seamen rushed on the enemy, scattering them like chaff, cutting them down right and left like so

many weeds. Their charge was as irresistible as an avalanche, and the rebels broke and fled, though they must have numbered four to one at least; and as they ran, the blue-jackets cut them down in scores, until, tired of the pursuit, they came streaming back in high glee, and put on their shoes again.

"Afterwards they 'fisted' the guns, as they called it, and dragged them out of danger."

"Ay, they're fine fellows," observed our skipper; "well cared for, well fed, and, as a rule, properly treated—so it's not to be wondered at. It is very different with poor merchant Jack; nobody looks after him nor cares a dump whether he sinks or swims.

"There was a lot of twaddling correspondence going on in the newspapers when I was in London this time about what they called the deterioration of the British seamen—written, it seems to me, by people who knew precious little about the subject. Now I've been a ship-master for the last five-and-twenty years, and I *know* that English seamen to-day are every bit as good men as when I first went to sea, at any rate; and they're the smartest, best sailors in the world, without the shadow of a doubt, in *my* mind. The only thing is that there are scarcely any left—that's the truth of it.

"Of course I don't refer to steamboat-sailors and trash; I mean proper able seamen, like the men I've got in this ship now—as good a ship's company, take them all round, as ever sailed out of the port of London. Trouble enough I had to get them too, for foreigners I never will sail with if I can help it; and when the day

comes that I can't get an English crew to man an English ship, then I reckon Jack Bowes will give up the sea in disgust. Thank God I'm able to say so.

"I think that this—and, in fact, all matters to do with shipping—is of great importance to the nation, though English people ashore don't appear to think so ; and, as far as my experience goes, if the other European nations had had the making of our laws in regard to shipping and trade, they couldn't have more ingeniously contrived to arrange them for their benefit and our ruin than we have ourselves.

"I don't know what Free Trade has done for the country ; maybe we're the richer and better off for it, maybe not. I only know how it has affected British shipping, and with that it has most certainly played havoc. Free Trade and Board of Trade restrictions have handicapped English shipowners to such an extent, that the foreigners—much to their gratification, no doubt—can, and *do*, take the very bread out of our mouths. I'll give you a case in point, one out of many that have come under my notice.

"Five years ago I commanded a ship of about a thousand tons—a fine, handsome vessel, sound as a roach, as I well knew. However, she'd run out of her class, and so down came the Board of Trade surveyors to where she was lying in the East India Docks ; and they prepared a long-winded report and insisted that she must be opened out, and this was wrong, and that was wrong, and she must have new decks—all this to be done, you understand, before she would be re-classed

and allowed to go to sea. Very well, the work would have cost about five thousand pounds ; so, sooner than go to that expense, the owners concluded to sell her.

“No Englishman would buy the ship, of course, for he would still have had to comply with the Board of Trade demands ; so, eventually, a Norwegian firm purchased her for, I believe, some two thousand pounds. I don’t remember the exact sum, but that was about the figure. The English ensign was hauled down, and up went the Norwegian colours. A Norwegian captain and crew came aboard, she was put in the loading-berth at once, and went to sea in less than a week. I’ve seen her twice since then—once in Sydney, and she lay ahead of us while we were loading in this ship in the London Docks last voyage.

“One day I took the liberty of going aboard. I saw the captain, and we had a long talk about the ship and one thing and another, and he told me they hadn’t spent a penny-piece on her hull since the day she changed hands, and didn’t intend to either.”

“Then, of course,” remarked Major Anderson, “that ship could carry cargo at a freight-charge that an English vessel could scarcely accept.”

“Quite so; the foreigners can beat us out of the field when it comes to a question of freight. They, under no restrictions whatever, are masters of the situation. All our shipowners can do is to cut down the expenditure to the lowest possible point, and of course that affects the seamen. Ships are undermanned, for one thing. I’ve got ten able seamen aboard here—five in

a watch—and the owner wanted to know whether I couldn't do with eight! Thirty years ago this ship would have had a crew of at least twenty seamen in the fore-castle—and not too many either for safety. Hard, killing work, poor pay, indifferent food, have driven our English seamen away, never to return. Jack has got no chance of making his voice heard, so he simply shrugs his shoulders and—*goes*. He is not like a workman ashore, who is almost chained to the town in which he happens to live, and who, when times are hard, has to go to the workhouse. Jack works his passage out, or he deserts from his ship. It is no trouble to him to get abroad; and so, as I tell you, it is not that the British seaman has deteriorated—nothing of the sort: he has migrated to 'fresh fields and pastures new,' and the old red ensign now-a-days, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, flies over the head of the foreigner who has taken his place. So here's the net result:—

"Foreign ships carrying English cargoes and grinding down freights, until it becomes a question whether you will send your ship to sea at a loss or let her lie in the docks eating her head off. English seamen driven out of the country, and our ships manned by foreigners."

"But, Captain Bowes, supposing we should have to go war with any maritime nation?"

"Ay, there's the rub. Hans Jansen and Peter Petersen won't *fight* for us, that's certain. Oh, well, I dare say when it comes to the pinch people will hold their hands up and say, 'No sailors! dear me, who'd have thought it!'"

"It seems a great pity that it should be so."

"Ay, and a great national loss too, though people can't or won't see it—the former most likely, for I must say that of all the people in the world, the average Englishman is the most profoundly ignorant on all matters connected with the sea. Yet let a singer appear on any stage dressed in what is considered the correct nautical costume (a sort of cross between a ballet-girl and a coastguardsman), and wave a sixpenny union-jack pocket-handkerchief—Lord, how the people applaud! 'Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves!' Quite so, and so wise has been her rule that, so far as her mercantile marine is concerned, she has ruled her old supremacy right out!"

"When do you leave Hong Kong, Captain Bowes?" inquired one of the officers, very likely glad to get an opportunity of changing the conversation.

"On Wednesday morning, I hope."

The conversation then became general—home news, local gossip and, the like were talked about; and so at last Major Anderson rose, and after thanking the skipper for his hospitality, he and the rest of our visitors bade us good-bye and went off in their boat.





CHAPTER XXVI.

PAGODA ANCHORAGE.

GETTING UNDER WAY—THE RIVER MIN—PAGODA ANCHORAGE—THE
TEA-CLIPPERS—A MAN-OF-WAR JUNK.



ON Wednesday morning the captain came bustling aboard.

"Get under way! get under way at once, Mr. Harvey!" shouted he, even before his foot touched the deck.

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the mate.

Now I was rather anxious to see how the captain meant to get the ship out from where she was lying—head to wind and tide—among the surrounding vessels. To me it looked an almost impossible feat, for the anchorage was rather crowded, and there were ships ahead, astern, and all round us. We only had one anchor down and that was brought to a short stay, the other was hove up while the captain was ashore, and it had only just been catted and fished when he came off.

"Lay aloft and loose the sails! Smart now!—and one

hand stand by each bunt gasket until I sing out 'Let fall!' "

Away we scurried, racing up the rigging and swarming out on the yards (we had a swarm of eight at the fore, including the boatswain), and very soon the quarter and yard-arm gaskets were cast adrift and made up.

"Are you all ready there?" shouted the mate, who was standing on the forecandle-head.

"All ready for'ard, sir!"

"All ready the main!"

"LET FALL!" and down fell the sails, swelling and fluttering in the soft morning breeze, and festooning the ship with their graceful folds. "Down from aloft!" "Sheet home, and hoist away!" were the next orders. And when the topsail yards were mast-headed, and the jibs run up—"Man the capstan bars!"

"Hove short, sir!"

"Vast heaving," replied the captain. "Haul aft the port-head sheets! Port fore-braces! Trip your anchor, Mr. Harvey, and stand by to give her scope, if necessary."

"Ay, ay, sir. Heave round, men—heave and break him out!"

There was a ship just astern of us, and when the anchor was tripped, the *Albatross*, directed by the helm and the wind in her head-sails, took the tide on her port bow, and, with her anchor just dragging on the bottom, sheered across the other ship's bows. We then braced the head-yards square, the helm was steadied, and we slowly dragged stern-first past her. And so, first sheering one

way and then the other, we skilfully backed out from the crowded anchorage. When the last ship was passed the anchor was hove right up, the head-yards were filled, we set the foresail, mainsail, and the rest of the canvas, and ran out.

“There’s the last of Hong Kong for some time to come,” remarked Edwards, as the ship, gliding rapidly past Green Island, shut in first the town and then the shipping in the anchorage from our view. We were soon out clear of the land, and by dinner-time the *Albatross* was ploughing along, close hauled on the port tack, with the coast of China, a mere blue, indistinct mass, away over the weather quarter.

It took us about a week to beat up to the entrance of the River Min, and then we took a pilot, and, standing in past the White Dogs, slowly ascended the sinuous, narrow river, with a fleet of sampans ahead and another astern, whose business it was to “slew” the ship when the sudden bends in the river made that operation necessary. Much good they did, too! and row enough they made over it. At last, after hours of this tedious work, our ship reached Pagoda anchorage, where, having picked a snug berth just abreast of the island, we moored her, furled all the sails in a proper harbour stow, squared the yards to a nicety, hauled taut all the ropes, got the accommodation-ladder over the side, and—went to dinner. What swarms of people came crowding about the decks—bumboat men, compradores’ runners, wash-women, curio-sellers, and so on, jabbering and chattering like so many monkeys. Woe betide any

Chinaman who even so much as showed his face at the forecastle door; bang would come a boot at him directly, and "Out of that, you graven image!" The wash-women were allowed to enter, though, but then they had dirty clothes to collect; besides, they are different.

"Now then, you two, take your dinners out on the forecastle-head, and admire the scenery."

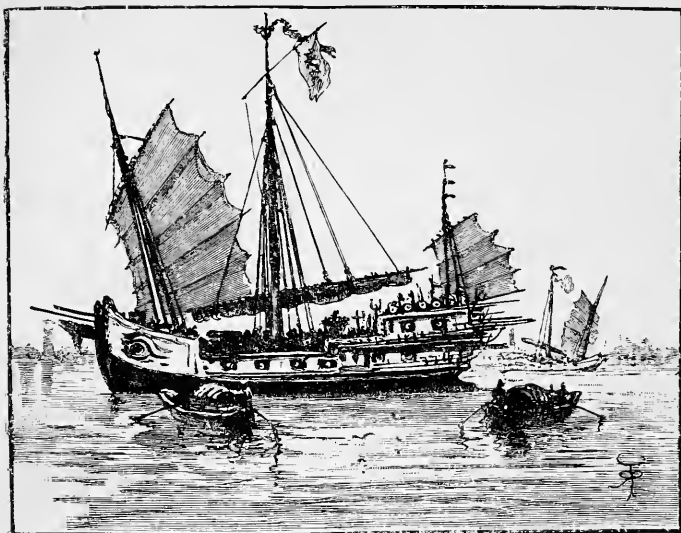
That was pretty fair cheek on Featherstone's part, wasn't it? Just as though we hadn't got dirty clothes to collect and send to the wash as well as the others! However, we went. Presently I saw a Chinaman come flying out of the galley as though he'd been shot out, and the cook after him.

"You dam debble! you teal my poker, eh? Ober de side you go!" and with that the old cook seized him and threw him right over the rail.

We darted to the side just in time to see the Chinaman fall plump on the top of a sampan's mat roof. That collapsed, of course, and then there was a regular scrimmage between the interloper and the proprietors of the sampan. Such jabbering! such "Hi yahs!" and "Sa-ne-Mahs!" How we laughed to be sure! The mate came up on deck just as this little incident had taken place, and ordered everybody out of the ship.

"Now then! out of this! clear off the ship's decks! Woyloo!" shouted he, and the Chinamen took the hint, and went scrambling over the sides and into their sampans, scuttling away like so many rats.

There are sixty-four ships lying here in Pagoda anchorage, waiting, like ourselves, for the tea to come



CHINESE WAR JUNK.

down from the interior of the country. What a magnificent fleet it is! In Hong Kong the *Albatross* was a noticeable ship, but here there are scores of similar vessels. They are more like yachts than merchantmen; built for speed and nothing else. Lying close to us are many of the world-renowned flyers. The *Yang-tsze*—*Serica*—*Ariel*—*Fiery Cross*—*Tait-sing*—*Tai-ping*—*Sir Lancelot*—*Titania*—*Ziba*—*Spindrif*—*Black Prince*—all beautiful, graceful crafts, faultlessly sparred and rigged. The River Min, both above and below the anchorage, is very narrow, but here it spreads out into quite a broad sheet of water, which is hemmed in all round by high, towering, thickly-wooded, hills.

Pagoda Island is the last of a chain of hills on the left bank of the river. It, too, is completely covered with trees, from amongst which peep the red roofs of a Chinese village. Right on the top is a real, live pagoda, though the two uppermost stories have been removed. Edwards says some men-o'-war's men pulled them down for mere wanton "devilment," and I dare say it is true enough. Away at the higher end of the anchorage, where the water is very shallow, a fleet of sampans, drawn up in two parallel lines are busily engaged in fishing with small nets, which are thrown from each boat (by signal, I suppose, for they all shoot out simultaneously every few minutes), and are hauled rapidly in again, amidst great excitement and fussy chatter. Close in to Pagoda Island, a huge man-o'-war junk is slowly stemming the ebb tide. She is exactly the same shape as an ordinary junk, and rigged in the same way. Her sails, though, are made of silk of a rich brown colour, and from her sides peep the muzzles of a few small brass guns.

The sides of her quarter-deck are hung with shields of many gorgeous colours, and over the head of the individual (probably her captain) who is kicking up such a row in the issuing of his orders to the crowds of men who are darting hither and thither about her decks, two of the crew are holding an immense umbrella. Presently, down come her three great sails by the run, and splash goes her clumsy wooden anchor; then, after a few minutes of raving and scurrying, she, too, lies motionless and still on the bosom of the placid stream.



CHAPTER XXVII.

FOO-CHOW.

“JOHNSON” THE BUMBOAT MAN—MISS “JOHNSON”—MY FIRST LOVE—
AN AWKWARD EXPLANATION—FOO-CHOW—FIGHT WITH ITALIAN
SEAMEN—JONATHAN TO THE RESCUE.

CAP'N say, my b'long ship bumboat-man,” said a big Chinaman, coming up and addressing several of the crew who were lounging about outside the forecastle door, smoking their pipes after dinner. “Every mornin', bleakfiss time, sampan come 'longside. Got egg, suga', blead, ebleyting got. All number one. Pleas' litec name in book,” continued he, producing a stumpy bit of lead pencil, and a very mangy-looking memorandum book, which he passed round for each man to open an account therein.

“What's your name, you d—d old scorpion?” asked Barrett.

“Ah-Chang-Loon,” replied the man, with dignity.

"Oh, we can't bother ourselves with a name like that, can we, boys? Let's christen him Johnson."

"Ay, that'll do."

"You savey! your name belong Johnson."

"Maskee, maskee,"¹ replied the bumboat-man, shrugging his shoulders. "You call me what you li'—one name good—all name good. Suppose you makee plenty buy, mose good. By-and-by come—catchee dolla'. Yes."

"What you give cap'n for 'comeshaw,' when he say you can sell things to sailor-man?"

"My no savey comeshaw," replied "Johnson." "That no b'long plover fashion—sell things cheap, no can give plesens. To-morrow mo'nin', sampan come, then you can makee looksee. Go' bye."

So every morning Johnson's boat comes off, and we get loaves of bread, eggs, fruit, and so on for breakfast. Sometimes a bottle of "square'o"² finds its way into the forecastle, and, though you will not be able to trace it in the account book, it is there all the same. And besides Johnson, there is another man—Snooks—who comes with oysters, which he sells at the modest rate of sixpence a hundred. They are rather small, but very delicious, and Baby and I have a hundred between us for breakfast every morning.

I am in love with Miss Johnson. She and old Johnson are the crew of the bumboat; he rows the bow oar, and she stands up at the stern and rows the after oar with

¹ *Maskee* means—What's the odds, who cares—please yourself.

² Hollands.

one hand, and steers with the other. She is a jolly girl, and I am head over heels in love with her. It is rather unfortunate that she is bigger than I am, but after all that doesn't matter much—I shall grow and she won't.

I believe she rather cares for me, at least, I know that "Tommee" gets more eggs for a dozen than anybody else. I always go down into the sampan to fetch what I want, and this morning I kissed her, and she kissed me back. It *was* nice. I was so confused, that, in climbing aboard, I broke six eggs, and dropped a loaf. Being in love is jolly, but I wish the men wouldn't chaff so. They call her "Poll," too, which is very low and common of them, and disrespectful as well. Her real name is Ah-Leene—isn't that pretty? I was so offended with Gudgeon this morning. He and I were on the forecastle-head when the sampan came paddling alongside—I generally manage to be up there when it comes—and he actually held me up and sang out—

"Here you are, Poll! here's your Tom-tit of a fancy man. Hold out your apern, and I'll throw him down."

I'll never speak to Jack Gudgeon again as long as I live!

* * * * *

Oh, I am so miserable! *It is all over.* Yesterday morning I went down to the bumboat as usual, and while I was spooning with Ah-Leene, that horrible old wretch of a Johnson came crawling in and caught us.

He was so angry. He picked up a bamboo stick and hit the poor girl across the shoulders with it, though I tried to ward off the blow with my arm.

“You go ’boa’d you ship!—Go!” he yelled. “My makee pay ’unner-twenty dolla’ for that piecee gal, belong my wiffee. Suppose you wantchee, pay me ’unner-twenty dolla’—can catchee. Suppose you no got dolla’, no makee lub!”

His wife!

We lay in Pagoda anchorage for nearly two months, because the river was so swollen by the rains that the tea-chops could not get through Foo-chow bridge. The city is quite ten miles farther up than where the ships lie.

Baby and I went there one day. Captain Bowes was going up to see about something or other to do with the freight, and he let us go with him in his sampan; so while he was transacting his business, we strolled about some of the streets, looking at the shops and the funny houses, and the mobs of bustling people. By-and-by we came to the bridge—such a bridge, too! Miles and miles long, and swarming with beggars on each side. Some with sores all over their bodies—some with no arms—deformities of all sorts were to be seen. One poor man had neither arms nor legs, and Baby said it was time to turn back then, or very likely we might come to one with nothing but a head, and that he had seen quite enough of such horrible misery.

So we went back, and rambled about the dirty narrow streets, and lost ourselves for ever so long, until, quite by accident, we came back to the street that leads to the bridge. I was very glad we found out where we were, for though we asked lots of people, no one was able to understand what we said; they couldn’t even make out

pigeon English. Swarms of boys, too, kept following us about, which wasn't pleasant. So we went back to the sampan, and waited until the captain came down.

Another day, one Sunday, our watch—Edwards, Barrett, Gudgeon, and the others—went ashore at Pagoda Island for a stroll. We walked about all over the place, and saw the graveyard for one thing. The bodies are covered with piles of stones, with pieces of "Joss-paper" stuck in the crevices; and in one corner, fenced off from the rest of the place, is a little nook where Christians are buried. The captain of an American ship—the *Gamecock*—died a few days after we arrived, and he was buried here. His body was taken ashore in one of the ship's boats, and following was a long string of other boats, for nearly every ship in the anchorage was represented in the procession. We took our skipper in the gig, and I was his coxswain. All the ships flew their colours at half-mast, and the *Gamecock* herself lay with her yards "cock-billed," and braced about anyhow, and her rigging all hanging in bights, until the boats returned, and then they squared yards and hauled everything taut again.

When we got out of the cemetery Barrett proposed that we should visit a drinking place that he knew of, and of course the others fell in with the idea at once, so we set off running down the hill, chasing each other all the way, and gambolling and prancing about like a lot of wild horses, until every one was out of breath and gasping. I didn't want to go into the bar when we arrived there, but Edwards said he was only going to

stay a minute or so, and then he intended to go straight off aboard, so—that being clearly understood—I went in with the rest.

“QUAN TUNG’S WHISKEY SALOON AND AMERICAN BAR,” was written in huge clumsy letters on a board that was stuck up in front of the shanty—a wooden affair all open to the street—and suspended from it were many gorgeous paper lanterns for illuminating purposes at night. Inside was a sort of counter covered with matting, and behind it were a Chinaman—probably Mr. Quan Tung himself—and two or three gaily arrayed girls, who evidently considered themselves extremely fascinating and attractive, if one might judge by the lackadaisical airs and graces they assumed.

At one end of the bar was a group of about twelve foreign seamen, apparently Italians, and they were all talking at once at the top of their voices, gesticulating wildly, and kicking up no end of a shindy about something or another. Several of them turned and scowled at us as we entered, of which ill-mannered behaviour our men took no notice whatever, and going up to the bar ordered their drinks. I wouldn’t have anything to drink, so Mr. Quan Tung gave me a stick of sugar-cane to chew. Gudgeon, though, insisted on my just sipping from his cup, so that I might say I had tasted Sam-shu. I did, and thought I had never tasted such beastly stuff in my life.

We were standing there quietly yarning about one thing and another, and I had forgotten all about the foreign sailors, or “Dagos,” as Barrett contemptuously

called them, when suddenly I heard a voice just at my elbow say—"Meester Eengleeshman, I dreenk your goot 'ealf."

Turning about I saw one of the Italians calmly take Barrett's whiskey, and, making a mocking bow, raise it to his lips.

"I beg your pardon, that's not yours!" said Edwards, quietly grasping the man's arm just as he was about to



THE SHINDY IN QUAN TUNG'S SALOON.

drink. "Take it, though, if you want it," continued he; and so saying, with a rapid motion, he dashed the cup in the foreigner's face.

Then, seeing that the man attempted to draw his knife, Edwards twisted his arm backwards—there was a sickening crack, the fellow's face turned ashy white, he yelled, and would have fallen, if Edwards had not seized him.

"Now go back, and get your friends to teach you

better manners," exclaimed he, lifting the foreigner as though he had been a child, and slinging him headlong towards his countrymen, several of whom were knocked down as he fell sprawling into their midst.

"Look out! They've drawn their knives. They'll be down on us in a brace of shakes!" shouted Gudgeon.

Now, fortunately, close by where we were standing was a stack of bamboo poles of various lengths, that were probably used for barricading the place up at night, and in a very few seconds each of us was armed with a good cudgel—no mean weapon either. The foreigners stood facing us with their knives drawn, and their eyes flashing with passion, but, though they doubled us in actual numbers, they did not rush at us as I expected they would; perhaps what they had already seen of the prowess of one of our little band made them rather cautious in their movements. Still, they *were* slowly creeping nearer and nearer, each swarthy face working with fury, more like demons than men.

"Get behind us, Tommy," said Edwards, "you'll do no good here. Come on, boys! don't let us wait for them," shouted he. "We'll show the hounds what Englishmen are, in spite of their d—d knives!"

So without more to-do our men dashed at the foreigners. Edwards had a bamboo that, as far as size went, would have made a very respectable topmast-stunsail-yard, and with it he played havoc sure enough. It was fortunate for him that I went behind, for a foreigner who had been knocked down managed to rise unobserved, and was just going to plunge his knife into Edwards's back, when

I, seizing a large earthenware jar that stood on the counter by its wicker-work handle, banged it with all my might against his head, and knocked him over again as clean as a whistle. He lay there stunned by the blow, so I took away his knife.

"Come on, you bold Americans! I guess here's Johnny Bull gone to battle. Heave it into them, my true-blooded Britishers—Jonathan's arrived on the scene!" and in dashed half a dozen or so American seamen, greatly to my relief, and ranged themselves on our side. With their help we soon drove the Italians out of the place, in fact they took to their heels and bolted.

The whole affray only lasted some few minutes, and it was over almost before Mr. Quan Tung and his fair assistants recovered their self-possession.

Barrett had a gash in his arm, Rocky and Tom Hearne were bleeding in one or two places, but there were no serious wounds, and a little white rag for bandages was all that was required to set matters right in the surgical department; while the medical department, presided over by Mr. Quan Tung, proved itself quite equal to the strain on its resources, and we were soon hob-nobbing away with the Americans as pleasant as possible.

"Ah wal!" exclaimed one of the latter (by the way, he was the same man who spoke to Baby and me in Hong Kong), "yew Britishers say yew hate us like pisen, and we Americans allow we kinder pine for your blood, but when it comes to *the* pinch, yew kin bet brother Jonathan will stand by you agin all *creation*. Thet's so, ain't it, bullies?"

"I'll go a lone hand on that," said another of our allies, and the rest nodded and expectorated freely, to show their entire approval of the sentiment.

'You was nigh on gettin' 'John Sheroke,' pardner," observed one of them to Edwards. "The boy was just in time, or in another wag of a moskito's tail, you'd hev had the knife in amongst your giblets sure as snakes is snakes."

"Who—me!" exclaimed Edwards.

"Guess thet's so; I seen him do it, jest as I come a tramplin' in. Look—he's got the knife and the neck of the jar in his hand now. One of them furriners was layin' low to plant his knife into *your* back, and the boy lammed him over the head with *thet* jar, and persuaded him to alter *his* plans. Thet was the one—him as crawled out last, graspin' on to his head 'sif he'd got a notion it wanted keerful handlin'."

"Wish I was a boy agin, I'd blush like that every two hours regular," laughed Gudgeon.

Edwards didn't say anything, he simply gave me a look that conveyed his meaning as well as though he'd spoken for an hour, and a hug that almost squashed my ribs in.

"Shall we go aboard now?" said he. "It is getting dusk, and perhaps those fellows will be coming back with thirty or forty more of the same kidney. I've had enough fighting for one day."

"Let's have one more drink to allow for coming up, then we'll pack out of this," said Gudgeon.

So very soon afterwards we were taking leave of our

American friends at the landing-place, and then (after a little delay caused by Barrett, who, being rather tipsy, wanted to swim off, if you please, and had to be expostulated with, and finally secured to prevent his jumping into the water) we rowed off to the *Albatross*, in rather a straggling fashion I must say.

“Boat ahoy!”

“No, no!” answered Gudgeon. “There, that’s proper Navy fashion,” remarked he.

“What does it mean?—why that there’s no commissioned officer in the boat. If there was one you’d sing out ‘Yes, yes!’ and if the skipper was coming off you’d sing out ‘*Albatross!*’ or whatever the name of the ship might be; they know who’s coming then.





CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOMeward BOUND.

LOADING FOR HOME—START OF THE RIVAL CLIPPERS—MISS FLIP—
THE CORAL REEF—A NARROW ESCAPE.

THE tea chops came floating down the river at last, and the anchorage soon became noisily busy as the Chinamen rapidly transferred their cargoes into the holds of the waiting vessels. Then came the news that we are to race home with the *Ariel* and the *Serica*, and everybody worked his hardest to get the cargo in and have everything in readiness for a level start; while nothing was talked about in the fore-castle but the sailing powers of the three ships, the carrying-on propensities of their several captains, and so forth.

Meantime the chests were scurrying into our hold in a ceaseless stream all day long, until at last the cargo was level with the combings, and not another chest could be squeezed in. Then the cabins were filled, and the saloon—all but the least space round the table,

and every available hole and corner in the ship was stuffed with tea until there wasn't room for another chest.

What a scene of hubbub and excitement our decks presented on the morning of the start! Coolies struggling along with the last of the cargo, washerwomen and others clamouring to have their accounts settled, stores of all descriptions being rapidly passed in over the side by gangs of laughing, jabbering Chinamen—tumult and confusion everywhere. We had been busy since soon after sunrise seeing everything clear, carrying the sails out of the sail-locker and stowing them in our berth—upon which a lot of Chinese carpenters were working away at finishing off the repairs—covering the hatches with tarpaulins, and helping the carpenter to batten them down; stowing away this, that, and t'other, and getting everything ready for sea.

The *Ariel* and the *Serica* were much in the same state as our ship, swarming with sampans three or four deep all round, as we could plainly see, and each ship lay with her blue Peter flying at the fore, cat and fish-tackle falls rove, and the usual signs of getting under way plainly manifest to an experienced eye (mine, for instance).

The tide served at about mid-day, and long before that time we, having gladly obeyed Mr. Harvey's order to "Spell-oh!" were hanging about outside the fore-castle, anxiously waiting for the order to man the capstan-bars. By-and-by the captain came on deck, and after taking a few turns up and down the poop with the mate, we, who

were all facing aft watching their movements, saw the latter touch his cap and come bustling along towards us. Every man was on his feet in an instant, there was no need for any order, and so with a hearty cheer we scrambled up on the forecastle-head, and in a few seconds the clink-clank of the capstan-pauls sounded merrily over the ship.

We had barely got our bars shipped, when the crews of the vessels which lay nearest to us came off in their boats and scrambled aboard to lend us a hand to heave our anchors up, and pretty soon each bar was stuck as thick with men as there was room for, and then they commenced to "shanty." The beautiful "Rio Grande" first; then "Storm Along," "The Blackwall Line," and "Homeward Bound." How the chorus of the latter sent the blood thrilling through my veins with excitement—

"Good-bye, fare ye well, good-bye, fare ye well;
Hurrah! my boys, we're homeward bound!"

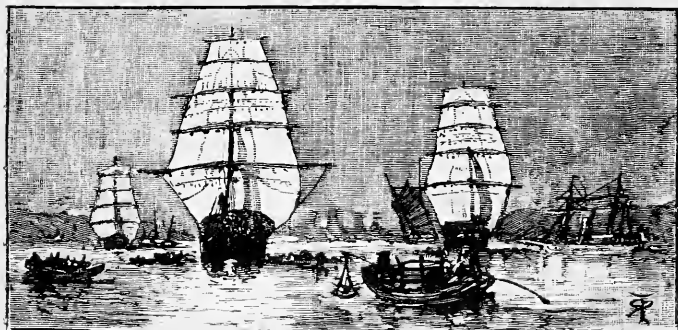
The port anchor was quickly hove up, catted and fished, and, while the starboard cable was being hove in, we jumped aloft and loosed the sails. The Chinese who were lounging about the decks clapped on to the halliards, and with their assistance the topsail-yards were walked up to the mastheads in double quick time. They quite enjoyed the fun, and, while the topsails were being hoisted, another gang scampered along with the jib-halliards, making the hanks fairly "whirr" up the stays.

"Hove short, sir!"

"Up with him!" sang out the captain.

"Heave, boys, heave, and raise the dead!" yelled Mr. Harvey, who was standing between the knight-heads.

Round went the capstan, slowly at first, as the ponderous mass of iron was broken out of its firm bed; and then, after a few vigorous heaves, the men ran briskly round, cheering and shouting, while the pauls rattled a rippling accompaniment to their trampling feet.



PAGODA ISLAND—TEA-CLIPPERS STARTING.

Slowly the ship's bows fell off, the head-yards were filled, and she began to move through the water. Those of the Chinamen who had stayed until now tumbled into their sampans and shoved off. Johnson, the bumboatman, waited until the last, and as he went off in his boat he set alight to several joss papers, his idea being to wish us good luck in the passage to England. Then the men who had been helping us jumped into their boats and gave us three cheers

as they dropped astern, and we were fairly under way.

The little English gunboat that came puffing and panting up the river a day or two ago fired a gun as we passed her, and the crews of each ship, as we glided by, jumped into their fore-rigging and gave us three cheers. And so, with much dipping of ensigns, cheering and excitement, we ran out of the anchorage, quickly followed by the *Serica* and the *Ariel*, who also took their departure amidst similar enthusiasm.

We were clear of the river long before dusk, and the *Albatross*, when the sun went down, was standing off the land with every sail set to a nicety, her yards braced sharp up on the starboard tack and the white foam swishing past her graceful sides. Quickly the daylight faded, and the leaning shapes of the *Ariel* and the *Serica* became more and more shadowy and indistinct, until at last they were blotted out from our view by the shadows of the coming night. We tacked twice before break of day, and, when the sun rose, the other ships were not in sight, not even from our fore-royal-masthead, for I went up there to have a look.

"Well, can't you see them?" asked Edwards, as I dropped out of the fore-rigging.

"No ; I wonder where they have got to," replied I.

"Oh, they didn't go about when we did, that's the reason ; perhaps we sha'n't see either of them for the rest of the passage."

"There's not much fun in racing when the ships you race against aren't in sight."

"*Fun !*" laughed Edwards. Haven't you found out by now that you didn't come to sea for *fun* ?"

"How long do you think we shall be tacking about like this ?"

"Pretty nearly a month, until we get clear of the China Sea at any rate. The monsoons changed while we were up the Min—the south-west one is blowing now, so it is a dead muzzler for us. Awkward, isn't it?"

"Beastly. I shall be tired enough of hauling the yards round and dipping the gaff-topsail-tack over by the time we get out of this provoking China Sea."

"Never mind, we're homeward bound," said Edwards.

How strict they are about the steering now ! On the passage out the officers usen't to bother much so long as you were somewhere near the mark, but now they are continually flurrying up the helmsmen with "No higher ! you'll have her up head to wind directly !" or, "Keep your luff ! Where are you running the ship off to ?" Edwards is the only one who doesn't want watching—he steers beautifully, and takes a pride in his work. I believe the mate would give worlds to have a chance to yell "No higher !" when Edwards is at the wheel.

The watch on deck, too, don't get such easy times at night as they used ; Mr. Harvey keeps them bustling about nearly all the while, until every sail is set to perfection and the yards are braced to the last degree of accuracy.

I take my trick at the wheel and the look-out now with the rest, and Mr. Harvey says I steer very nicely. I am getting big too, and it is not necessary to have a

tub to stand upon now, for I can see the compass-card by tip-toeing a little. I wish I might be a bit thicker, though; the men chaff me dreadfully because I am so skinny. Gudgeon is the worst, he said the other day that I had a chest like a tuppenny tin match-box, and that I was getting as long as a wet week.

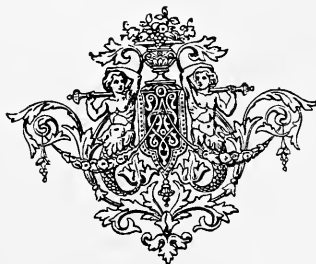
I was on the look-out one night from ten to twelve when we were about half-way down the China Sea. It was a rather dark night and slightly hazy, and soon after six bells went, I heard a faint sort of rumbling noise which I did not heed much at first, thinking it was thunder. My little cat was on the fore-castle keeping me company;—Johnson, the bumboat-man gave it to me, and her name is Miss Flip—she seemed very uneasy in her mind about something or the other, and while I was wondering whether it really was thunder, or what else it could be, she frisked off and stuck her nose as far over the bows as she could reach, and then, after sniffing the air for a little while, she crept stealthily off the fore-castle, and sat crying on the fore-hatch. So then I sang out to the mate, and asked him to come for'ard, for the roaring noise was getting plainer every minute, and the water ahead seemed full of indistinct shapes, as though the slight mist that lay on its surface had been endowed with tangible substance, and was heaving in violent commotion.

One glance was enough for Mr. Harvey. "Hard up! Lay aft the watch! Brail in the spanker! Square the main-yard!" shouted he, as he leapt off the fore-castle head.

"Confound your thick head; you ought to have called me before! That's a reef ahead."

We ran away to leeward of the danger, and then the roar of the breakers was plain enough, and the seething turmoil of the white water became ominously distinct. The smell of putrefying sea-weed, too, came down the breeze, and scores of gulls flew screaming and whirling overhead.

The reef was not very large, so after a little while we hauled up again. The moon, too, had risen in the meantime, and the mist had quite disappeared, leaving the reef, now far astern, plainly in view, while, as far as the eye could reach, no other object broke the expanse of heaving water.





CHAPTER XXIX.

SOUTH-EAST TRADES.

JAVA—BECALMED OFF ANJER—THE *SERICA*—A WILD RACE—SOUTH-EAST “TRADES.”

THERE are heaps of islands at the south end of the China Sea, especially round about the Gaspar Straits. What with them and the reefs and shoals, the navigation appeared to me to be rather embarrassing. Mr. Harvey showed me the chart one day, and it seemed almost impossible to get through such a labyrinth; we did, though, and reached Anjer without mishap. The ship was becalmed for a few hours in Sunda Straits, and a boat full of natives rowed off and came alongside. They had monkeys, Java sparrows, cocoa-nuts, bananas, plantains, pine-apples, jagghery, and all sorts of things to sell.

Jagghery is lovely stuff; it is a kind of sugar, moulded by the natives in half cocoa-nut shells. Baby and I bought a lot. The head man in the boat told us that

the *Serica* and the *Ariel* had not passed Anjer yet, so we are first ship so far.

"We've given them the go-by, Tommy," said the captain, laughing, and clapping me on the shoulders. "There's nothing can touch the *Albatross* at going to windward, my boy," continued he, fairly beaming with pleasure.

Just then the mate came up. "Look, sir," said he, handing the spy-glass to the captain; "here comes one of them, or else I'm very much mistaken."

The old man took a long look away to the north'ard, where the white sail of a ship was visible. "By gad, you are right," exclaimed he, "and coming up hand over fist too; it is the *Serica* for a thousand."

"*She* has wind enough at any rate, and here we are projicking about without a breath," said the mate.

"Yes, confound it all," replied the captain, shutting up the glass with an angry snap, and stumping off up and down the poop-deck, pausing now and again to look at the approaching ship, or to glance anxiously above and around for the slightest symptom of a breeze.

"Which is it?" asked the boatswain, as I walked for'ard to where all hands were clustered.

"Captain thinks it is the *Serica*."

"So do I—yes, that's the *Serica* right enough," exclaimed Barrett, "bringing a bully breeze with her too; we shall have it presently. Isn't she smoking along!"

Presently Baby came rushing from aft to tell us that the mate had made her out to be, as we guessed, the *Serica* beyond any doubt, and before long she was in

full view, ploughing through the smooth water at a fine speed ; while far ahead of her the sea was dark with the coming breeze, though not the faintest breath had reached us as yet. By-and-by, however, a few cats-paws showed here and there, then our sails began to lift and flutter, and by the time the *Serica* had run up on our weather quarter, we, too, had the full strength of the wind, and the *Albatross* was tearing along in splendid style under a press of canvas.

“Now you’ll see a race—Go it, old packet !” exclaimed Gudgeon.

“Come off the forecastle-head there !” yelled Mr. Harvey. “Watch on deck, get on with your work !”

“There you are ! I thought so,” growled old Barrett. “What on earth did you want to perch yourselves up there for !—right in the man’s full view. We’d a been let alone if you hadn’t been such a pack of fools as to poke yourselves where he couldn’t help seeing ye.”

The breeze held steady, and when the shades of night stole over the waters, the ships were still abreast of each other, neither having gained any appreciable advantage. But at midnight, when our watch came on deck, the rain was pouring down, and the wind had dropped entirely. It kept so all the four hours. We were at work nearly the whole time, bracing the yards about whenever Mr. Harvey felt, or fancied he felt, a flutter of wind. It was so beastly. You see, the rain off the ropes runs into one’s sleeves, and trickles about like cold worms wriggling down one’s back, and once—when we had hauled the clews of the mainsail up and squared the

main-yard, and the mate a few minutes after ordered "Starboard main-brace—Down main-tack—Haul aft your sheet"—a whole lot of water, about a cask-full, I should think, fell out of the sail when the clew-garnets were let go, and smothered me. I was so savage.

The *Serica* managed to sneak past us during the night, and when I went to fetch the tea from the galley at breakfast-time, she was about a mile ahead, and, like ourselves, hauling her yards about to take advantage of every light and fickle movement in the air.

Very soon after eight bells, though, we got a breeze from about east, which cleared away the damp and misty vapour that was hanging about, and then the sun shone out, the sodden decks dried, and everything was pleasant again.

Now, Captain Bowes is a wily person, and as he had an idea that we should get this wind long before it actually came, the other watch had been kept busily at work—right up to breakfast-time—reeving stunsail-gear, sending the booms aloft, getting the sails out of the sail-room, and bending them. And so, when the steady wind came, we were under a cloud of canvas in no time. Fore, lower, topmast, topgallant and royal stunsails. Main-topmast, topgallant and royal stunsails, and a lee main-top-gallant stunsail.

We came up with and passed the *Serica* before they managed to set her light canvas, but she wasn't long in getting on equal terms with us in that respect, and then both ships went ploughing away before the freshening breeze, with the *Albatross* leading by about a mile ; two

stately piles of towering canvas, white and glistening in the sunlight, sweeping steadily through the flashing waters—a beautiful sight!

Still the breeze increased, and the sea, which had hitherto been calm and placid as a mill-pond, began to heave in response to the rising wind, and here and there the curling waves threw flecks of white foam on the deep blue face of the awaking ocean.

It was blowing pretty fresh long before noon, and there was a hard grey look in the sky to windward that told of more wind as plainly as possible. We were fairly flying now, and dashing along through the water like an arrow, every rope to windward as taut as a harp-string, and the light spars bending with the strain until it seemed they must give way under it.

Edwards and I were on the flying jib-boom-end once during the forenoon, and I was supposed to be helping him to seize on the downhaul-block, for which he had just made a new strop. From there we had a splendid view of our ship, with her sharp graceful bows slipping through the waves, every now and again throwing a leaping cloud of spray high into the air as her martingale swooped down with its end almost in the water, and then reared skyward again, while the hissing, seething foam dashed boiling away past the shining copper that encased her symmetrical sides.

Aloft, too—how quiet the swelling sails appeared, though each was distended to its utmost with the weight of the wind that was intercepted by the snowy cloths. Away on our weather beam, the *Serica*, under every

stitch that could be packed upon her, was slashing through it, her long, low hull glancing swiftly along amidst a perfect smother of foam. And overhead a clear blue sky, across which a few grey clouds were scudding, throwing their flitting shadows along the surface of the deep, where the waves were leaping in wayward confusion, their crests torn and scattered in sheets of glittering spray by the sweeping wind.

"Fine sight, ain't it?" remarked Edwards, looking up from his work.

"Yes, but don't you think we ought to carry a little less canvas?"

"Oh, you'd better go and ask the cook about that."

"Now, don't humbug, Edwards."

"Well, ask the captain then, he'll be sure to know. There, that job's done; so lay in, I'll bring the spike and the ball of spunyarn, and mind you don't fall into the ditch. I'll wait until you are off the footrope."

Scene at two o'clock.—More wind and sea, both ships surging furiously along, and not a stitch taken off either; the lee side of our decks all awash, and two hands at the wheel, while the rest of the crew stand by with everything all clear for running.

The mate with his arm round the pin-rail, just abreast of the main-mast, glancing anxiously aloft at the spars and canvas; the second mate aft by the wheel conning the ship; and the captain, leaning against the weather mizen-rigging, calmly smoking a cigar.

"Sail oh!" There she is, on our lee-bow; a full-rigged ship reaching away to the south'ard, under single-reefed

topsails, and main-topgallant-sail set over. A few minutes and she is on our lee-beam, and we can see her crew tumbling up on the fore-castle-head to look at us. As we fly past, they cheer us and wave their caps, and hoist their ensign, and dip it. Another few minutes and she is out of sight.

And so we both dashed on until nearly four o'clock when—"Clew the main-skysail up! Haul down your stunsails, Mr. Harvey!" shouted the captain.

In came our flying kites, and the *Serica* followed suit, her stunsails fluttering down from aloft like so many wounded sea-gulls.

"Lee braces! Board the main-tack! Down fore-tack! Haul aft the sheets! Out bowlines!" were the next orders, for the wind was slowly shifting ahead, until at last we were only just able to lay our course.

It blew very hard for half an hour or so, and then the breeze died quietly away, leaving the ships tumbling about on a heavy swell, that came rolling up from the north'ard. This gradually subsided as the evening wore on, until the face of the ocean was at peace again, and lying almost motionless, with its western horizon all ablaze with the grand splendour of a tropical sunset. I can't describe it—neither can Edwards. He said so. And then I asked Jack Gudgeon to tell me what he would say if he had to write down a description.

"Well," replied he, standing up and shading his eyes with his hand, "I should say the sky over yonder was like red hot gold mixed up with red hot diamonds—that the clouds overhead was like the scarlet curtains in a

public-house window of a frosty night, and then agin the sun was like a woman's golden hair by gas-light. Then I should say the sea was black, and purple, and deep blue, and crimson, just according where you happened to look, and that the light from the sun came streaming across it, making our sails all pinkified, and glinting the ropes like the gold stripes on the legs of a regiment of sojers. That's all I could say, for the whole consarn has made my eyes regular water with looking at it."

Shortly before the light faded from the western sky, we got a little breeze which did not reach the *Serica*, and so we had the satisfaction of seeing her lying becalmed and motionless, while our ship was stealing away on her course. The wind was all sorts of ways during the night, and towards morning it headed us off, and blew pretty hard for an hour or so, and we stood away close-hauled to the south'ard until daybreak, when it fell calm again. The *Serica* was then quite out of sight, though I went up to the main-skysail-masthead with the mate's glasses slung round my neck to see if I could discern her anywhere. That afternoon we got the south-east trades, so the booms were rigged out, and when all the stunsails were hoisted again, off went the *Albatross*, under a cloud of swelling canvas, flying at a spanking rate across the Indian Ocean. Scarcely a day went by without our passing a ship or two—homeward bound, like ourselves. Big or little, we left them all behind, almost as though they had been at anchor, and each, as we flew by, signalled her name and "Please report me."



CHAPTER XXX.

CARRYING-ON.

JIM HAILES AND BRIDGET—ROCKY AND HIS PARROT—ROUND THE CAPE—PLANS FOR THE FUTURE—ON THE GOODWINS—THE LIFE-BOAT—THE *FLASH*, OPIUM CLIPPER.

THERE are several animals of one sort and another aboard. Baby has a monkey, Jim Hailes—Barrett called him that, because he says he is just like a boarding-master of that name at San Francisco. Then there are Miss Flip, who is very friendly with Jim Hailes; Bridget, the pig—she runs about the decks, and is more like a dog than a pig; two little black Chinese dogs, that the skipper is taking home for a friend of his; and a parrot belonging to Rocky, who is going to convey it down to Scotland as a present for his sister when we arrive. Rocky says he always takes a parrot home with the same intention, but that not one of them has reached its destination yet. Something generally happens that upsets his plans. As far as I can hear, the “something”

is that, instead of going to Scotland, he loses or spends all his money, and has to sell the parrot and promptly go off to sea again.

This voyage is to be an exception, though, and, immediately his wages are paid him, Rocky will call a cab, and drive off to Euston Station at once. Oh yes. I don't think his sister would care very much for this parrot ; it *is* such a hoary old sinner, and when it swings about upside down in its cage, it uses most frightful language. Right end up it isn't so bad. I must say that Rocky doesn't wish it to be so horribly profane, and, as a sort of mild corrective against the language it has picked up in the fore-castle, he has been teaching it to say "There is a happy land, far, far away ; etc." The other day it made us all roar by suddenly screaming "Miss Flip—Miss Flip—Whir-r—There is a happy land—D—n my eyes—Far, far away." Then it burst into a fiendish chuckle, and swung head downwards for ever so long.

Jim Hailes and Bridget are sworn enemies, they hate each other—like marriageable sisters do, as Edwards says. Jim began to tease the pig the first day he came aboard, and it wasn't long before Bridget got a chance to pay him back. He was sitting on the spars one afternoon, basking, and she crept up behind him and suddenly charged him off, head over heels, and would have trampled him to death if he hadn't contrived to lay hold of a rope and swing himself up on the rail. There he sat, looking thoughtful, and feeling himself all over to see if he was broken anywhere ; ever since

then, Jim goes up into the foretop when he wants to bask.

* * * * *

We had a fine run across the trades, and then a week or so of squally, beastly weather, and changeable winds, of which we made the best possible use. The topgallant-sails have not been taken in once since we left Foochow, and the royals precious seldom. It has to blow, I can tell you, before any canvas is taken off the ship. They even hang the skysail on her until the very last minute, and then one of the men has to go up and stow it—I can't. I've tried lots of times, but in a strong breeze I haven't strength enough to muzzle it, in fact it takes charge and muzzles me. Then the mate calls me a "flimsy thing," and wants to know what earthly use I am, "projicking" about the decks, and eating as much as a man. Sometimes he gets quite cross, and one night he wouldn't let anybody make the skysail fast but me ; it was blowing hard and raining too, and I *couldn't* get the sail in, for as fast as I gathered up one part of it, the other blew away again. At last Barrett came up and helped me, and when the sail was stowed I went down quite exhausted and wet through to the skin. How the mate stormed to be sure ! He made such a fuss about it, and when I showed him how the canvas had torn the skin off the backs of my fingers, he only raved at me, and said I ought to be stuffed and put in a glass case—and all that sort of thing. When he left off howling I slipped for'ard and made some coffee (I stole it from the pantry) with the aid of Baby's reading lamp, which

is just the thing for that, and took Mr. Harvey a pannikin full. That put him in a good temper again, though I rather think a great deal of his anger was only make-believe. I don't know, though, it's hard to say.

* * * * *

The ship went round the Cape of Good Hope like a racehorse, with a strong, fair wind from the south'ard and a heavy sea running.

There were several other vessels in sight on the morning we passed Cape Agulhas, but they were all reefed down, plodding cautiously along, while we simply tore past them under our topgallant sails. Both these sails blew away during the day, the fore one was ripped clean out of the bolt-ropes, and went scurrying off to leeward like a cloud, and we had barely got a new one aloft, bent and hoisted, before the main-topgallant sail split right up the middle, and whipped itself into ribands when the halliards were let go. So then there was the job of getting another one out of the sailroom, bending and setting it as quickly as possible. It seemed rather foolhardy to me, but I suppose those in authority knew best. At any rate the ship plunged madly along, with her decks to leeward full of white water almost up to the combings of the mainhatch, and sheets of spray flying right over the lower yards. We caught sight of Table Mountain early in the afternoon, when the mist and driving vapour to leeward cleared for a few minutes, and then the helm was put up, the yards were squared, and we ran off before the wind at a fine pace.

As soon as the braces were belayed, we loosed and

set the royals, flying jib, and gaff-topsail, rigged out the boom and set the foretopmast stunsail. While the watch were dragging out the tack, the boom-brace parted—the stick flew forward, bending like a whip handle, and then snapped short off close to the iron.

“Let go the halliards!”

Down came the sail, blown right across the head-stays, and the broken stick, held to it by the tack, fell on the forecastle-head. The mate came for’ard and lent us a hand to secure the sail, and get the gear all clear again. And when that was done—

“She’s got to go, boys!” exclaimed he. “Homeward bound! Up with another boom, and let her rip!” and he went off rubbing his hands with delight, to see at what a fine speed we were travelling.

Of course with the wind on the quarter, the ship was going along very much easier and better than before, when both wind and sea were on the beam, and so, after the topmast-stunsail was set again, we hoisted the lower stunsail as well, and under the weight of this additional canvas, the ship sprang forward like a mad thing.

“Well,” remarked Gudgeon, while we were at tea that evening, “I’ve been a-fishing a good many years now, and never seed a vessel cracked on to like this before.”

“Nor me either,” replied Barrett, smashing up a biscuit by giving it a blow with his fist. “I’ve heard tell of these here tea-clippers, and the likes of that, racking topgallant halliards, and carrying away stunsail booms by the dozen, but this is my first voyage in one. I thought she was going to run away with us this afternoon. I did so!”

"When that lower stunsail was set," observed Ross, who had had the two to four wheel, "I thought she was going to soar. She jumped right out of the water—that I know for a certainty. The mate says to me, 'Steer small,' says he. 'Steer!' says I. 'I'm only a-steering agin air half the time, her rudder ain't been in the water for the last five minutes!'"

"I don't mind being at the wheel in this ship," said Gudgeon; "you can handle her like a boat if you only watch her—not like some of 'em as will almost turn round and look at you now and again, and steer as wild as a paper kite with his tail gone."

"I was in one old timber drougher as would take four points each side of her course—running," observed Barrett. "The English Channel wasn't more'n just wide enough for her. Certainly she had seven or eight feet of water in her when we arrived in London River, perhaps that was the reason."

"I wonder where them other two ships is."

"What two—the *Ariel* and the *Serica*?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I dare say they aren't far off," said Edwards.

"Well, I'll bet a month's pay they ain't round the Cape yet, neither of them," said Gudgeon, leaning forward and taking another biscuit out of the bread barge. "That's what I say," continued he, looking round to see if any one was inclined to differ from his opinion. "They're smart ships, both of them, but they hain't been sailed like this one has, I know."

"She's been travellin' this good day, anyhow," re-

marked Rocky ; "hark at her buzzing through it now — sounds like thousands of bees a-humming."

"Hush ! listen ! What's that order ? Loose the main-skysail, as sure as I'm a man ! Put your head out of the door, Tommy boy, and see what's going on, my son."

"Yes, Baby has gone up to loose it ; and a couple of hands are rigging out the topgallant-stunsail-booms—fore and main."

"Who is on the poop ?"

"Only Mr. Locke."

"Blest if I don't think he's the worst of the three for carrying on ! He's one of your quiet ones, but a regular smart young chap, ain't he ?"

"That he is," replied Gudgeon ; "and when he sings out an order you can hear what he says just as plain as you can the mate, with all his shouting and hollering."

"Ah, he's a proper man, is Mr. Harvey."

"Who said he wasn't ? Nobody ever heard me say a word against the mate, I know ; nor yet against the others aft there, seeing as they've treated me like a man since I've been aboard this hooker."

"So they have all of us, we ain't got nothing to growl about."

"This ship is one in a thousand," exclaimed Jack ; "here we are, all Englishmen to start with ; where will you find that in a ship's fore-castle now-a-days ? Not but what Dutchmen may be just as good sailors as we are ; still, I must say I like my own countrymen best by a lump. They're more livelier ; 'tis desperit dull

work being shipmates with foreigners. Why, one voyage there was a Dutchman called Aymos Jansen in the crowd and he never opened his lips to a living soul—except about his work—all the passage out. He used to sit on his chest and sing hymns or something in his watch below, when he wasn't turned in ; and if anybody spoke to him, he'd only say 'Ough' like a pig. We tried chaffing, but that weren't no use. 'That ain't dead, is it?' 'No, that's alive, I think!' 'Look—it's a-moving!' one and another would say. But we might just as well have blowed the fog-horn against a clap of thunder—old Aymos never took no notice.

"The boarding-masters got him when we arrived at New York, and the last I saw of Aymos, he was towing down the East River in a big lump of an American brig. She passed close astern of us, and he stood there on her forecastle-head looking at his old ship with no more expression in his face than there is in the bottom of a bucket. I waved my hand to him, but he took no notice. Of course they ain't all like that, but there's not so wonderful many foreigners as makes what you can call good shipmates."

"Can't say I care much for them," said Barrett ; "and my experience is—I've had a lot too—that, in a gale of wind, or when there's danger and may be death staring you in the face, for smartness and what I might call reliableness, a proper English sailor is worth the best half-dozen foreigners as ever broke a ship's bread. And what with low wages and ships being overrun with Dutchmen, I reckon it is time to fleet out of England

altogether. That's what I'm a-going to do after this voyage, anyhow."

"Best thing too ; there's no place like the colonies for a seaman, not in my opinion ; but there, it don't much matter where you go to, English sailors is always bid high for, any country that has got a navy will take us, and glad of the chance. *They* don't turn their noses up at English merchant-seamen."

"Not much," observed Tom Walton, who, having finished his tea, was busy cutting up a pipeful of tobacco.

"And yet," said Barrett, bitterly, "if you was to read what's wrote in the papers in England, you'd think we was the wust set of drunken obstroperous vagabonds on the face of the earth, and not fit to sail under no white man's flag. All right, let them say so if they like ; it strikes me, that if they can do without us we can do uncommon well without *them*. Let them fill their ships with foreigners ; I don't care. I for one ain't going to stop—that's all."

"I've had almost enough of English ships too," said Walton, quietly ; "what do you say, Jack, shall you and me hook on together ?"

"*I'm* agreeable," replied Barrett.

"All right, that's settled then, and here's my hand upon it."

"I'm going down in the country to see my sister as soon as the ship's paid off," continued Barrett ; "you'd best come 'long with me, Tom ; we can hang out a week there as 'johnnick' as possible, and spend a lump less money than if we was in London."

"That will suit me, Jack ; I don't want to stop in the smoke," replied Walton. "Besides, sailor town ain't like it used to be ; and you might walk from one end of the Highway to the other without hearing a word of English spoke now-a-days ; I don't care much if I never set foot in the old place again."

"The best thing we can do is to stop at the Home until the ship is paid off, then we shall be pretty sure not to get in debt. It'll be no Leicestershire that will see us if we go to a boarding-house, I know."

"All right, I don't mind," replied Walton. "It's only for two or three days. The Home is swarmed with steam-boat sailors as shoves on three times the airs of the real *genuine* article. Able seamen they calls themselves after a couple of trips up the Mediterranean in a smoke-jack. But that don't matter to us, we can keep ourselves to ourselves and say we're artillery if they ask who we are."

"I'm going to stay at the Home myself," said Gudgeon, "seeing as I mean to go up for second mate this time. I ain't afraid of the seamanship part—they won't paul me in that, I fancy, and young Tommy here and me has been hammering away at the Navigation—ain't we, boy?—until he's managed to ram some notion of it into this thick head of mine, and I think a fortnight at the school will about see me——"

"Corporal, let's you and me go chums," interrupted Ross, "like Tom and Jack Barrett has. I went up for second mate last time in London and passed in everything but rule of the road ; I'm going to have another

shot at it this time ; we can go up together if you like, and if we pass we'll start for the colonies, we'll be all right there with second mate's tickets. Which is it—yes or no ? ”

“ Yes, my son, with all my heart,” rejoined Gudgeon, holding out his hand.

“ That's your sort,” exclaimed Rocky, shaking it heartily ; “ only I tell you what,” continued he, “ I want to take a trip down home first, just to see the folks, for I ain't been nigh them for years. That there parrot, too, wants——”

“ Oh, bress me ! bress me ! Where saints in glory stand. Hey-*hip* ! Twice two-times ! ” shrieked Poll, swinging herself violently backwards and forwards.

“ She knows every word you say,” remarked Ross, eyeing the bird almost with dismay.

“ I'll twist her neck if she don't alter. D'ye hear that ? ”

“ Bright, bright as day ! ” croaked the parrot, ruffling up her feathers and appearing to go to sleep.

Rocky looked at her for a few seconds, and then he solemnly shook his head and nodded to us, as much as to say, “ Listen to that ; she knows, bless you.”

“ Well, as I was saying,” continued he, “ I mean visiting the old people when we are paid off ; and if you like to come with me you'll be heartily welcome, Jack, that I know, so say the word.”

“ I'll go with you, Jack——”

“ Ah,” interposed Hearne, who had been quietly listening to the conversation ; “ I've heard this sort of talk

many a time before. I'll lay any money we're all five of us dead broke and outward bound again in less'n a week after we get our pay. Hold on until the runners come aboard with bottles of rum in their pockets ; wait until the gals come flocking alongside when the ship hauls into dock, where will you be then ? Blueskin and Madge Manners and Long-nose Poll and all that mob will stick to us like pitch to a blanket ; there's no such thing as getting clear of *them*."

"Ain't there !" exclaimed Barrett, stoutly ; "I know there is. A man is no man if he can't act up to his word. I'll make one to swear off agin touching a drop of drink of no sort whatsoever before I'm safe in the train ; who else will ?"

"I'll promise not to," said Gudgeon.

"Me too," said Ross.

"So will I," said Walton ; "only, one break it, all break it."

"Let them break it that likes," exclaimed Barrett, "I sha'n't. Let us sign proper articles—*now*, while we're in the mind to do it. Tommy boy, get a bit of paper and write down what I'll tell you. There's no mistake if we have it wrote down, and I know if we keep clear of the drink the rest is easy as falling out of a tree. Nobody'd hook on to them frowsy gals if he was in his sober senses. Why the *smell* of the sperrits the runner chaps carries about with them would stop a clock, and after a couple of sucks out of a bottle you're a gone coon, they can do what they like with you then."

"There you are, now read it over."

So I read what Barrett had dictated to me, though each of the others had suggested minor alterations or additions, which after long debate had or had not been agreed to, and this is a copy of the document :—

“ Ship *Albatross*, on a passage from Foochow to London, and now this — day of —, 18—, in lat. $34^{\circ} 49'$ S. ; long. $15^{\circ} 32'$ E. We, the undersigned do promise and faithfully swear that we will not touch nor drink no intoxicating liquor, nor beer, whisky, gin, rum, or brandy, in no shape nor form whatever, of any sort, excepting the captain gives us a tot. Not while towing up the London River, nor ashore, nor nowhere, until such time as we are paid off and in the railway train bound for home, as previous agreed. And to stand by one another like true men and shipmates, and help one another to keep this solemn promise, which is not to be broke, not on no pretence whatsoever.”

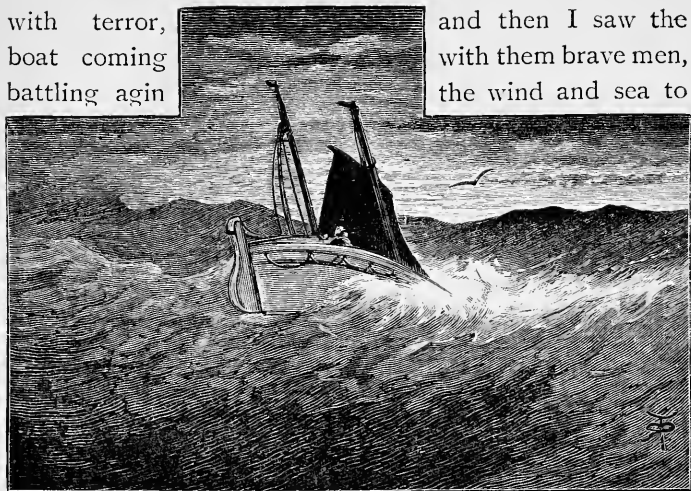
“ There,” exclaimed Barrett, when each had signed his name to the paper. “ That holds us tight, don’t it ? ”

“ My word it does,” said Ross.

“ Well, I hope we shall keep it, that’s all,” said Gudgeon, gravely. “ I’ve been knocking about at sea, man and boy, since I was eleven years old, and it’s time I thought of bettering myself. My father was master of a coasting schooner out of Southampton, and I sailed with him until I was eighteen or thereabouts, and then the little vessel was lost, parted from her anchors in the Downs, and went ashore on the Goodwins in a gale of wind one bitter winter’s night. Father and all hands except me was drowned before the lifeboat came ; he made me fast with his own hands to the stump of the mainmast, and while he was doing it a sea broke over her, and swept him and all the rest overboard. I was hours there, almost perished with the cold and half dead

with terror,
boat coming
battling agin

and then I saw the
with them brave men,
the wind and sea to



THE LIFEBOAT RETURNING.

save life, if so be life was to be saved. Ah, they *are* men ! Let people ashore run down poor Jack as much as they like. For the sake of peace and quietness we'll allow to being worthless trash, scum, and all the rest of the hard words as they heaves at us. Perhaps we are—perhaps we ain't ; what I will maintain is that them English boatmen—brothers of ours it may be—are the daringest, bravest men on the face of the earth ! A ship cast away on any part of the coast—it don't matter where—is sure of assistance ; blow high or blow low, raging seas, hail, snow, any weather—off comes the lifeboat and the gallant men in her. Swept by the spray, capsized may be, through the boiling surf—on she comes !

“And you in the wreck watch them with straining eyes, while the green seas are flooding the decks, and

your ship is thumping on the treacherous sands, threatening to break up each time she comes crashing down on her bilges. Her masts gone, and a jumble of tangled spars and rigging to leeward tumbling and heaving in the foam. What a thankful cheer goes up when at last the boat comes struggling along with the bowman standing up, and motioning for you to lay hold of the line he has in his hand all ready to heave. And then the wild scud back under the tiny reefed foresail. And the eager crowd on the little pier-head. And the coxswain's shout of 'All saved!' as the boat plunges by into the smooth water beyond.

"How the people shout for joy and race along to meet you at the landing place, and poor shipwrecked Jack is cried over, and warmed and clothed and fed by them poor souls, just for pity's sake and nothing else.

"I've been rescued twice by the lifeboat, once when I was telling you, on the Goodwins, and another time off the coast of Norfolk; so I know something about it.

"Well, after the schooner was lost, I joined the Navy as a second-class ordinary seaman, and got rated A.B. within a twelvemonth. I dare say I might have done well if I'd stuck to the service, for I got a first-class petty officer's badge before I was four-and-twenty. That was in the *Excellent*, out in China; we was on the station there four years and two months—time the war was on. I was coxswain of the second cutter, and one night we was sent ashore—a lieutenant with us—for a survey, to see if there was any of the enemy about.

Well, we pulled quietly in and landed, and hadn't but got clear of the boat, when—bang! came a volley, and four or five hundred Chinese sojers sprang up and made for us. Our men fired one round, and then jumped into the boat and shoved off quick, and in the bustle I was left behind. Well, I knowed that was no time for me to stand there hollering to the boat, and so, before the Chinamen came rushing along, I started off and plunged into a rice-field close by, and there I lay until by-and-by I heard them go back, shouting and cheering over their victory. I dare say they made it out to be one.

"I stopped there for an hour, I should think, and then I crawled out and dodged along the sea-shore, until I came to a place where there was three or four small junks lying on the mud, so I crept into one, and sat down to wait for her to float, which I could see wouldn't be long first, and of course I meant to shove off in her then and try to find the ship. However, just as I was thinking it was time to be seeing about making a move, I heard voices on the shore, and presently a sampan came sculling along with three men in her.

"I hope they're not coming here, thought I, as I dived into the junk's little fore-cabin, in case they should see my head above the rail. Sure as fate, though, while I was sitting listening, the boat came scraping alongside, and the men jumped aboard and commenced to get under way. Here I am fairly caught, like a rat in a box, thinks I. I made no noise, though, and fastened the door with my knife lanyard in case anybody should

call, and before long I heard the lip-lap of the water against her bow, and by that I knowed she was moving. What on earth shall I do, thinks I—jump out on them and trust to luck, or what? I had my cutlass, do you see, in a belt round my waist, so I drawed it out and laid it handy for use when the time should come. However, after thinking it over, I reckoned I'd best lie quiet, and see what would turn up.

“One of the Chinamen came and tried the door once, and when he found it was fastened, he jabbered away for a bit, and then another came to try and open it, and I thought the time was come then sure enough; I was ready, cutlass in hand, in case the door should be burst open, but it wasn't; and after a good deal of pushing and shoving, I heard the third man who was steering, say—‘Ah, leave it alone, it's only stuck,’ just as plain as if he had spoken English. They went away then, and a minute or so afterwards I saw them show a light over their stern. Three times they showed it, and after a few seconds of silence, they all started jabbering again, as though their signal had been answered, and then they eased away their sheets and ran off before the wind.

“The perspiration was standing in big drops all over my face. I didn't know what to do—so I set my teeth and cast the lanyard off, and made my mind up to sally out on them without more to-do. Just as I had got the door a bit ajar, though, I heard a hail come over the water, and then the familiar sounds of slatting canvas, rattling blocks, and the shouts of seamen fell on my ears, so I was certain there was a vessel being

hove-to not so very far off. Then, while I was straining my ears and scarcely able to breathe for excitement, I heard a gruff voice say—‘Sing out to the lubbers to bring their boat under our lee-quarter!’ A few words of Chinese followed, and in a minute or so there was a bump, and a smothered curse on the stupidity of the Chinamen, from some one within a few feet of where I was crouching, as the junk came floundering alongside the ship. I crawled out then, and got into her main-chains, which was just abreast where I was hid.

“The vessel I’d boarded was a long, rakish-looking schooner, that I saw at a glance. Nobody noticed me, for most of the crew were busy passing small packages of something or another down the gangway into the junk. One man was standing there with a lamp, while another took tally, and so, as they were all busy, I reached the deck without being seen. The man I judged was the captain was leaning over the lee-rail, and looking on at the work of loading the junk, so I went up to him and touched him on the shoulder. ‘Beg your pardon, sir,’ says I. Lord, he jumped as though he’d been shot when he caught sight of my man-o-war’s rig, and hauled out a pistol.

“‘Don’t shoot—I’m only one man,’ says I.

“‘How did you get here!’ exclaimed he, still keeping his revolver pointed in my face.

“‘In the junk, sir—stowed away in her forecastle.’

“‘Didn’t they know you were there?’

“‘No; and a good job for all of us that they didn’t know.’

“‘Well,’ laughed he, putting away his pistol (I was glad of that), ‘I thought at first that perhaps thirty or forty more of you had managed to scramble aboard, but as there’s only one, I dare say we sha’n’t quarrel.’

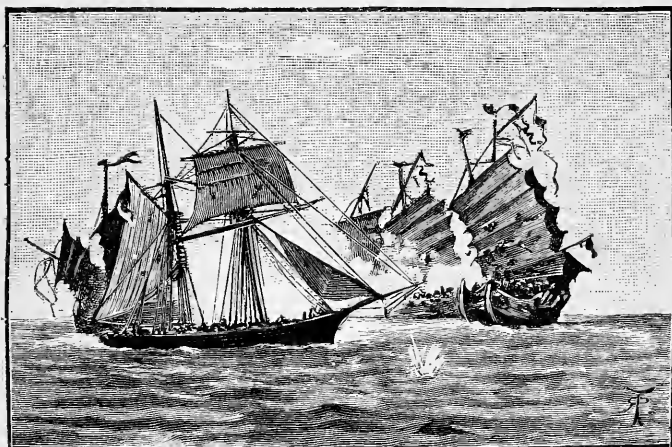
“Then I told him all the yarn from first to last, and he was very much amused at it, and got the man who could speak Chinese—the mate as I found out afterwards—to tell the crew of the junk how they’d brought a man off without knowing it. So they all had a good grin over the business.

“Well, the schooner—the *Flash* was her name—was one of these opium clippers, and the stuff they was passing into the junk was opium. Of course, fool-like, I shipped in her, though the captain was very fair, and told me he’d land me the first chance if I wanted to leave. I didn’t want to leave her, the life suited me too well for that, after the routine and discipline of the Navy. But Lord! that was a desperate trade if you like. The *Flash* was armed to the teeth, and full of men—most all English and Americans. She was a ‘*Flash*’ too, and no mistake. We was most always in action, generally three or four times every voyage, with them man-o’-war junks. It didn’t matter how many came along, we’d sail right straight ahead and take no notice, unless they opened fire on us. They used to catch it hot if they did—we warmed them up then, but we never stopped to fight, time was too valuable for that, and if they let us alone we let them alone.

“Why, once we ran into Swatow, when there was *five* war junks lying at anchor there. We had our guns

loaded and run out, hands to quarters, and everything clear for action, and so we went in and landed the stuff, and turned round and went out again, right under their very noses, and nobody dared to say—Stop!

"That was the time for money—dollars in one scale, opium in the other. That's how we used to sell it, and, though the ship got most of the haul, we forecastle hands had as much as we could spend, and that's all sailors



THE *FLASH*, OPIUM CLIPPER, ENGAGING WAR JUNKS.

want. The *Flash* came to an untimely end at last, for she went ashore on the Paracels in thick weather, and broke up. I don't think anybody was drowned, there was boats enough for all of us, and the one I was in got to Hong Kong all right in a few days. I dare say the others arrived all safe and sound—I didn't wait to see, for there was a ship lying in Hong Kong bound home, and just ready to sail, so I shipped in her and left.

“That’s many years ago, and since then I’ve been sailing about the deep blue sea—like the man in the song ; in English ships, American ships, two voyages whaling. That caper in the *Independencia* (I told you the yarn, didn’t I ?), and now, here I am, you see, still an able seaman, and sitting yarning to you when I ought to be drumming away at them logarithms. Where’s my little pupil teacher ? Come here, you joovenile Sinbad !

“No, we aren’t going to do any work now, for it’s close on four bells, and then I shall have to go and steer the wheel ; I only wanted to see as all this preaching and yarning hadn’t sent you to sleep.

“You like listening to sailors’ talk, do you ! Ah well, take my advice boy, and when you get ashore—*stay ashore*. Then, when you get up in years and walk about the city of London, wearing a long-sleeved hat and a tail-coat, and a fathom or so of gold chain round your neck, with a watch hooked on to the end of it, you can talk of the times when you were a laddie, and lived in a ship’s forecastle with Jack.”

Ting-ting ; ting-ting. Tong-tong ; tong-tong. “All the port watch !”





CHAPTER XXXI.

BABY'S CHAPTER.

BABY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOG—THE LONG-TAILED CLICKMA-
CLAPPER—MARY PRICE AND HER ADVENTURES.

THE fine strong breeze carried us right into the south-east trades, and then, with stunsails set both sides, we swept steadily on towards the equator.

Past St. Helena and Ascension—league upon league added to our swiftly flying track along the sunny Atlantic—every day a mighty stride nearer home.

Home! Nothing else is talked about! We have been cleaning ship—for home. The captain has been making up his accounts, and clearing up all his papers—for home. Even the old cook has been heard to speculate upon the amount of “slush” he will have to sell—when the ship arrives home.

And so across the line, for the fourth and last time this voyage, when the trades fell lighter and lighter, and

each day's work on the mate's chart shrunk in its pencilled length, until the track stopped altogether for a whole day, and was rather zig-zaggy and undecided for two or three days afterwards. Then we got the cool, breezy north-east trades, and it expanded again, as the *Albatross*, close-hauled, and with every stitch she could stagger under, which with us means every stitch that it is possible to set, dashed bravely along as though she knew that every plunge brought her so much nearer to England—and home.

You may think I am giving my log the "go-by," considering that I have brought the ship, from the time we caught the south-east trades, to now, in about twenty lines. Well, so I am. It has been so hot, and we have had such heaps of work to do in the sun, cleaning, scraping, painting, &c., &c., that I am quite too weary to write even when I have a chance. Edwards, too, is getting very lazy, and he won't write a word now; he says he has written quite enough. He has written lots, that is true, but he might as well keep on.

The other day I asked Baby to have a shot at it, and he wrote several pages. I just glanced at his contribution, and it seemed a lot of rot; however, it all helps to fill up the book. His comes next.

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Ladies and gentlemen. Bless you all, especially the former. I am Baby, if you please, and Jim Hailes and I are going to write in Tommy's log. I have the pen, and Jim is to be "boss" of the ink-pot. No, it is not good to drink, you Jim! Now, was there ever such a

dreadful beast? He saw me dip the pen in, so he must needs put his finger in the ink and dabble it all over his face. *Ah, you!* There—it's always the way; when I speak cross to him, he comes and cuddles my neck; he is cuddling now, and rubbing his inky paw up and down my nose and chirruping. How can I write while this is going on? Now do be quiet, there's a nice little monkey, and let us get along, or else Tommy will growl at us when he comes in. Ah! here comes Bridget, and Jim has flown to one of the top bunks. Come and be stroked, Bridget. Aren't you glad the sailors have begged the captain not to have you killed? Pork is very nice, Bridget, fresh pork I mean, of course, but I'm glad too that you aren't to be killed. Besides, you are so lean with running about the decks and chasing Jim Hailes over the spars, that I don't think you would make a good feed for one watch, much less for all hands, They say you are clipper-built, Bridget; so you are, you are like Tommy, all legs and wings. I never saw such a person as he is; when he squats down his knees come as high as his head, and he is so clumsy!

The other day, while we were all rub-scrubbing away on the poop with holy-stones, he had to carry a bucket of sand down to the main deck, and instead of going down by the ladder like an ordinary mortal he fell out over the edge, bucket and all, and rubbed such a lot off one of his—well, what he is pleased to call his legs. While he lay there struggling, the mate came along and, asking what he was "projicking" about like that for, slashed a bucket of water over him; and it was such a

joke when he got up with his clothes all sticking to his body with wet; he looked so flimsy. That is just the word the mate used, and it is very appropriate. The men all laughed as he went floundering off with the bucket; but you and I didn't laugh, did we, Bridget? for he's a dear old boy, and we are so fond of him, eh, you thin pig? Don't you wish you could climb like Miss Flip? There she goes along the edge of the bunk. Wouldn't you go and flurry up old Jim if you could do that? "Ouf!" That means yes, I suppose. Look out, here comes Tommy!

What a hubbub there was! Come down from the bunk, Jim; Bridget has gone now, and so has Tommy. He came flying in, head first, tripped over the raised threshold, and shot headlong in among the mess traps, capsizing a kid of cold pea-soup all over the place. Then he rushed to his chest and seized the first thing that came to hand—which was a flannel shirt—and lugged it out; with that he carefully mopped up the floor, and afterwards he went off with his shirt to tow it overboard by the sleeve, so as to wash the pea-soup out of it. His hair was full of pea-soup too, and when he came back he sat on his chest and combed it out with one of those combs with fine teeth—teeth on both edges. Bill Jones, in our watch, says they are called "West country fowling pieces." Then he rubbed his toes, and wiggled the big one on his left foot backwards and forwards, and sideways, and said it was sore.

"How much have you written, Baby? let's look?"

All that ; but you aren't to read it now ; go on deck and attend to your business."

"All right—go ahead, old boy, scribble away as hard as you can to make up for leeway."

"But I don't know what to say."

"Oh, yes you do ! stick down anything, lies or not, it doesn't matter ; only don't lie about me, or there will be a death in your family."

"Very well ; go away, and don't come here bothering again, or I won't write another word."

Now, Jim, let us get on. First, though, suppose we "makee look see" what some of this scrawl is about. H'm. "Setting up rigging." I remember that very well ; I was harried about in the same way. Didn't they shriek at me when the winch-handle caught Bill Jones on the nose, through my surging the rope too much ! I couldn't help laughing. Old Bill didn't laugh ; he hove round with one hand and held on to his nose with the other for a long time, and looked quite sad. When the lanyard was set up, and one of the watch had gone to rack it off, Bill came and gave me half a dozen hard cuts with the end of a rope. Two for not surging properly ; two for his poor nose ; and two for laughing. Served me right, didn't it ? Oh, here's all about my falling overboard. I thought old Billy Looney was a shark at first. Wasn't I just about pleased when the boat came !

"Gale of wind off the Cape," yes, that's all right—only it didn't seem quite so bad at the time. Edwards wrote that, I can see ; I know his writing. Oh, bother ! I can't read all this rubbish.

Jim! bring that pen back. Bring it back directly. I saw you, trying to poke it in the parrot's eye! you sinful wretch! Very well, come and cuddle then, only please be quiet or I'll hang you up by the tail.

What lots of ropes there are in a ship—scores and hundreds—and each has its own name. It was very perplexing at first to find just the right one among such crowds. Down-hauls, and out-hauls, and brails, and braces, and halliards, and sheets, and tripping-lines, and clew-lines, and bunt-lines, and tacks, and lots more. If you happen to let go the wrong one there is such trouble. Then the names of all the other things on board a ship! I don't know half of them yet; even the sailors forget at times, and if the exact name of anything they want happens to slip from their memory, they call it a chicken-fixing, or a gadjet, or a gill-guy, or a timmey-noggy, or a wim-wom—just *pro tem.*, you know.

Mr. Locke told me once that there were only nine ropes in a ship; it was a catch, though, I found that out when he told me their names—bell-rope, sail-rope, bolt-rope, wheel-rope, foot-rope, man-rope, mast-rope, buoy-rope, and yard-rope. Mr. Locke also told me that he was in a church once, and the parson—who, in the course of his sermon, had occasion to describe a calm—said, “When there is a calm, my brethren, there is but little wind, and the sails hang motionless from the yards.” “You're another!” sang out a sailor who was in the congregation: “when there is a calm there ain't no wind at all, and the sails don't hang from the yards, they hangs from the jack-stays!” I don't believe that story.

Another of Mr. Locke's tales is that in Devonshire, where his people live, there is a man who is supposed to be silly—they call him Jimson; and one day Jimson told the fishermen that by going to London he could arrange so that they might have full moon all the time the herring-fishing was on. So they subscribed five shillings each for his railway fare and expenses, and Jimson went off with the money and didn't come back for ever so long.

Devonshire people are very peculiar if what Mr. Locke says is true.

He told me that once they beat a monkey to death because they thought he was a French spy! (You sha'n't go to Devonshire, Jim.)

The tale about the watch is very funny. A ship was wrecked, and a large watch and chain happened to be washed up on the beach, and the villagers couldn't make out what it was, for it ticked so that they could hear it a long way off. So they sent for the wise man, and as he was so old and wise that he could not walk, they had to fetch him down to the beach in a wheelbarrow. His name was Jan, and when he arrived they said: "Now, Jan, tell us ot 'tiz, for us donnaw." And Jan put on his spectacles, and looked at the watch and chain, and said:

"My dear zaul! Wheel ma back! *Wheel ma back, I tell'ee!* 'Tiz a long-tailed clickmaclapper! Do'ee hayve stones at'n, an' kill'n so dead's a nit!"

"Shall us kill'n now!"

"Ah, my! if you was for layve'n while mornin', he'd be grawed so beg as Hillsaborough!"

So then they fetched stones and killed the watch.

I wish I could remember all Mr. Locke has told me at one time and another ; his tales are nearly always about Devonshire people, and he tells them in such a quaint, old-fashioned way, and without a smile on his face, though I simply roar the whole time. Then he looks surprised and almost grieved, and begs me not to laugh. That makes me worse.

That tale about Jan and the long-tailed clickmaclapper almost sent me into a fit, but now I have written it as well as I can, it doesn't seem a bit funny.

Oh, I remember another of his yarns. It was about an old woman called Mary Price, who came to London to see one of her daughters who was married and lived near the Tottenham Court Road. And Mary Price went in a 'bus to see Westminster Abbey on the day after she arrived in London, and when the conductor came to collect fares he asked her, "Where to, mum?" as usual, and Mary bridled up and said: "Mind your awn bis'ns! My! ot odds is it to you where I'm gwain to? Go 'long with your darin' imperence!"

So the conductor grinned and said no more ; and he let her ride up and down between Victoria station and the Adelaide for the rest of the day, for of course she didn't know where Westminster Abbey was, and she thought the 'bus was going there all the time. That was a joke, wasn't it?

A day or two afterwards she went out to buy something, and got lost and forgot the name of the street where her daughter lived. She didn't know what to do

then. She asked lots of policemen, but of course they couldn't tell her, and at last a constable advised her to go with him to the station, for, poor thing, she was in a terrible state by then, and frightened out of her wits. When she got to the police station the inspector advised her to telegraph to Devonshire for her daughter's address, so she filled in a form and they sent it for her.

Her husband was having his dinner when the message arrived.

"Thomas, send me Martha's address, for I'm lost and here to the police station, waiting."

"Aw, my dear heart alive!" exclaimed he to his son. "Your poor mother's gone mazed, sure nuff, and they've took her to the police station! Quick! gimme my hat and stick—I'm gwain to Lonnon!"

And off the old man went by the next train.

Well, Mary waited and waited, and no answer came, so by-and-by she drove off in a cab to Waterloo and went right back to Devonshire. There was a pretty kettle of fish!

I think that is as much as I need write in old Flimsy's log. Let's see—seven pages and a bit. Oh yes, that is quite enough.

Good-bye.

I remain,

Yours truly,

BABY.



CHAPTER XXXII.

END OH!

NORTH-EAST "TRADES"—BOARDING-MASTERS—SARGASSO SEA—THE VOYAGE DRAWING TO A CLOSE—UP CHANNEL—THE *SERICA* AGAIN—A SPLENDID RACE—THE WINNING SHIP—"ONLY TWENTY THOUSAND MILES."

LIKE sailing where the trade winds blow, best of all. There is no pulley-hauleying to do; and now, if the wind happens to be a little unsteady, the ship simply breaks off or comes up a bit; you don't have to touch the braces. The sailors approve of trade winds. Mr. Harvey told me one night why they blow and all about it; but I was thinking about something else at the time, and so I don't remember much of what he said, except that the sun does it all by warming the air, which then goes off to be cooled, and cold air immediately rushes into its place until it too gets warmed up, and so on for ever. I wish the trade wind began near England, so that we could sail on like this until we were far enough

north, and then tack and stand right in for the channel. What a lot of trouble that would save !

This reminds me of something Jack Gudgeon was saying yesterday about a boarding-master in London who was fitting out a young seaman. The boarding-master had got his month's advance, so he didn't want to provide more clothes than he could help, and he said : " Jim, my boy ! " (the sailor's name was Jim, and it was winter time) " monkey jacket and oil-skins you don't want, because the ship will be out in the hot weather in a couple of days—she will catch the north-east trades off the Isle of Wight this time of the year."

Mustn't he have been green ? — I don't mean the boarding-master. But, from what I can hear, the English boarding-masters are nothing like as bad as the American ones. Mr. Harvey was telling me last night of one in New York who had agreed to provide so many hands for an outward-bound ship which was on the point of sailing, and, when it came to, he was one short. So he hurried ashore and went into a barber's shop that was close to the waterside, and asked the barber to come off to a ship that was lying in the river, to shave the captain, who was ill and couldn't come ashore, and offered him a dollar for the job. So the barber was delighted, and packed up his razor and things ; and as he went out of the door he told his wife that he should be back in half an hour. He didn't come back in half an hour, though ; he didn't come back for two years ! For the boarding-master got him to have a glass of whiskey on the way down to where the boat

was waiting, and drugged him; and, when the poor barber was quite senseless, his apron was hauled off, that and his shaving-box were thrown into the river, and he was got into the boat and lugged on board the ship as an able seaman.

"He's a bit drunk, captain," said the boarding-master, "but I guess a bucket of salt water will soon set him to rights."

So, the crew being complete, the ship got under way and went off to China, barber and all.

In between the Gulf Stream and the current that runs all along by the Equator is a part where there aren't any currents, and that is called the Sargasso Sea, because of the seaweed that floats about there in bunches, though the water is miles deep. We caught a huge bunch one day, and in it were several small crabs—tiny things—and a fish about three inches long. It was a yellow fish with a large mouth, and it had branches of the same colour growing all over its body. In fact, it was exactly like a bit of the seaweed until you looked closer. Then you could see it was a fish. Perhaps the crabs didn't know he was there, and walked into his mouth by mistake. I don't know what else he could have lived on, and I dare say he was not foolish enough to eat seaweed when he could get crabs. We put him in a bottle, but he didn't like living in a bottle, so he died, poor thing.

After the north-east trades were done with we had the usual calms, thunderstorms, and variable winds for the best part of a week. Then a fine breeze came from

the south-west and lasted for days, carrying us along the chart by big strides. And so our track crept onwards, bit by bit and day by day, until this morning, when I had a look at it, the Lands End was only about two inches off. I told Barrett how close it was, and he said he didn't care if it was two feet off; and when I asked him why, he told me he wasn't in any hurry to get in, and that—"More days, more dollars!"

"The voyage is drawing to a close, Tommy boy. If this southerly breeze lasts we shall be abreast of the Lizard by sunrise. A couple of days ought to see us in the London Dock. Sha'n't you be glad to get home again?"

"Yes, sir, very glad."

"Won't mamma be proud of her sailor boy, with his face browned by the sun and the sea breezes—half of it's dirt, I believe; wait until you get a good wash. I should like to be behind you one of these days when you're sitting in the drawing-room, 'blowing' to the girls about the voyage. What you've seen and what you haven't seen would fill a big book—eh? I'm to remember the invitation and be sure to come and see you at Hampstead. Oh, that still holds good, does it?"

"Yes, sir, and if you don't come I shall have to fetch you."

"Well, so you may; then I shall know you are in earnest. It will have to be after the ship has discharged, for, until the cargo is out of her, my time will be taken up from morning to night. She is going into

dry dock then, and I shall be at liberty. Maybe I'll have to look for another ship, though—who knows?"

"I hope you won't, sir, unless you have a chance to be captain. I wish, when we go away again, that everything might be the same as it is now; it would be dreadful to have all fresh faces; I shouldn't like it a bit."

"Ay, boy," replied Mr. Harvey, kindly, "so should I, only I know how impossible it is. In a few weeks hence we shall all be outward bound, one going one way, another another; perhaps no two of us will ever meet again. Change—change—change. New friendships, new hopes, new fears. Another voyage or two and you will have forgotten even the names of your present shipmates. Oh yes, you will! although you look so dismal at the idea of such a thing."

"I shall never forget you, sir, as long as I live!"

"Very well, we'll see; perhaps you will, perhaps you won't. I hope not, for 'old Harvey is very fond of his little watchmate, and wishes to see him grow up to be a good, trustworthy man, and a reliable seaman and officer. There! Now paddle off and look at the time, for something tells me I ought to be below and asleep before long. Take my word for it, you'll find both hands as high up as they can get, and that used to mean twelve o'clock when I was a boy."

There was still a brisk southerly wind when we came on deck at four o'clock, and the eastern sky was just showing faint signs of the coming day. The captain was on the weather side of the poop and I was sent off,

immediately I got aft, to see who was on the fore-castle-head, and to tell him to keep a sharp look-out.

“Light on the lee-bow, sir!”

The captain and Mr. Harvey came over to leeward, and after a long look, “That’s the Lizard,” said the former. Then to the man at the wheel, “Keep her east, a half south.”

“East, half south, sir.”

The yards were then braced up a bit, and by the time that was done there was light enough for us to see the land plainly enough.

“England once more!” exclaimed Edwards, giving me a thump on the back that made my eyes water.

At sunset we were off the Bill of Portland, the lights on it flashed up just as darkness came stealing in; and at midnight we were judged to be abreast of the Isle of Wight; wind still southerly, but not so much of it as there was in the morning. The weather, too, was inclined to be hazy, and so it continued until four o’clock, when we went below. At least our watch went below, I didn’t. I was too excited to go to sleep, so I stayed on the poop with Baby, and we walked up and down yarn-ing about what we intended to do next week, and all the rest of it.

As soon as the daylight made surrounding objects partially visible, we saw a ship on our weather beam, looking at first like a black smudge against the grey sky. Mr. Locke was spying at her through his glasses, and at last he said, “I can’t make it out; that ship has been in sight for some time, and we don’t seem to be passing

her!" Of course, for the *Albatross* not to pass every ship she came across was very incomprehensible. He kept looking and wondering, and at last he said, "Boy, go and give the captain a call." The captain had scarcely been on deck long enough to take a peep at the stranger, when the breeze suddenly freshened up, the mists of morning vanished as though by magic, the rays of the sun, which had just risen, streamed merrily across the crisp Channel waves, and there, not more than two miles on our weather beam, was the *Serica*, ploughing along like ourselves under all plain sail!

"Turn the hands up!" roared the captain. "Hands make sail! jump aloft and rig the booms out! Be smart, men!"

Everybody was on deck in no time, and working like niggers.

"Topmast stunsail halliards! walk him up, my sons! Belay that! out tack, boom-end him! Now your lower halliards! Are you ready there with that main-topmast-stunsail?"

"All ready, sir."

"Bend on and hoist away, then!"

And so on, until the top-gallant and royal stunsails too were hoisted and set in their turn.

The *Serica* meantime had not been idle, and, though we got the start of her, it was not long before her yards were dotted with seamen; then she, too, quickly set all her flying kites, and the two ships went scudding off up the Channel at a spanking rate, racing along nearly neck and neck.

Off Dungeness a huge, outward-bound steamer, full of people, passed close alongside, and to leeward of our ship. How they cheered us, to be sure! and no doubt the two flying piles of canvas, apparently so disproportionate to the long, lithe hulls, must have looked very beautiful from her decks.

On and on, past Dover, round the South Foreland, through the Downs, where we were leading by half a mile, with the wind right aft, and stunsails at the fore, both sides. Past the North Foreland, where a tug-boat was waiting for us. "Can't stop for you!" yelled the captain as we tore by. Up the Prince's Channel, with the wind on the port beam, and freshening until we heeled over to it, and drove through the short choppy waves of the flowing tide in splendid style. How the people in the little coasters gazed open-mouthed at us as we dashed past! And so between the treacherous sands until the old Nore was in sight, and then the dear old *Worcester*, lying tranquilly at her moorings off Southend's long straggling pier, looking exactly the same as when we were towed past her at the beginning of the voyage. How natural it was to see the market boat put off from the pier-head and come struggling along on a diagonal course across the tide; and the dingey, with two boys paddling about in her; and some one in the chains practising heaving the lead. There was some commotion aboard by now, for they had made us out, bless you, long ago, and her forecastle was crowded with fellows.

"See your old ship, Tommy?" exclaimed the mate.

"I should think I do, sir! I've been looking at nothing else for the last quarter of an hour. They see us, too—just look at the fellows!"

"They can't well help noticing us," laughed Mr. Harvey. "It isn't every day in the week that vessels come tearing up the Thames in this fashion. Look!—there's a hand going aft to her ensign-staff. Jump up in the mizen-rigging and wave your cap while I dip to her—they'll recognize you plain enough against the spanker."

How they cheered when we commenced to dip! I waved my cap, and shouted too, and got so excited that I very nearly fell out of the rigging. When our men heard what was going on, they all bundled up on the forecastle-head, and gave three tremendous cheers in return. It was so nice of them to do that.

Away we flew, past Leigh, with its fleet of little bawley-boats, and the Chapman—like a huge red spider with his legs stuck in the mud,—and Holehaven, where the Dutch eel-boats lie; and past a river steamer, crowded with holiday-makers, who, rushing to look at us, made her heel over tremendously. They cheered too, and waved their pocket-handkerchiefs frantically as we swept by, and the harp, fiddle, and cornet men, who had been playing a polka on the bridge, struck up "See the conquering hero comes," and then "Home, sweet home."

There was just enough east in the wind by now to allow us to lie up the Lower Hope, so we hauled down our stunsails and braced sharp up off the Mucking, when the

Serica was not more than half a dozen ship-lengths astern. There wasn't a tug-boat anywhere in sight, even if we had wanted one, and so with a swishing breeze we tore along, round the Ovens buoy and almost up to Gravesend.

"Shorten sail, Mr. Harvey!"

In came our light canvas, and then the mainsail, foresail, and spanker were hauled up and brailed in.

"Clew the lower topsails up! Let go topsail-halliards! Stand by the starboard anchor! LET GO!"

We have won!

I heard the captain ask a Custom House officer, as he came scrambling up the side, if the *Ariel* had arrived yet. "No, sir," answered he, "but we are expecting her by to-night's tide, she was signalled off St. Catherine's Point this afternoon."

A few minutes later, and the *Serica* came in and anchored just astern of us. We cheered her, of course, and then her crew cheered us. I dare say the good people ashore wondered what on earth all the fuss was about.

"Where have ye been racing from, boy?" asked a man, one of the dozens of loafers who had clambered aboard as soon as our anchor was on the ground. "From the Land's-end?"

"No," said Baby, loftily, "only from China. Twenty thousand miles!"

THE END.

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